

**PATRIOTIC SUBLIME:
MUSIC AND THE NATION IN AMERICA, 1790-1848**

by
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Abstract

“Patriotic Sublime: Music and the Nation in America, 1790-1848” analyzes patriotic music in Cincinnati and Baltimore, and in the national print and performance networks that crisscrossed the antebellum United States. It argues that Americans established a distinctive kind of patriotic sentiment, the patriotic sublime, through music. During this period, citizens used music to articulate their nationalist sentiments, attaching it to emotional expressions and republican martial virtues in civic celebrations, commercial plays and concerts, and printed music.

This dissertation examines patriotic songs and musical performance, and the intersecting public and private venues in which patriotic music was performed between the 1790s and 1840s. It also shows that patriotic themes circulated among different genres of music and performance, from sacred church music and military marches to minstrelsy. The nation’s burgeoning print culture disseminated patriotic music widely by reporting on performance in newspapers, magazines, and memoirs, and by circulating songs in sheet music, broadsides, and other forms.

Elites in early republican America wished to promote patriotic feeling; they believed that “national music” could refine the sensibilities of the new nation’s citizenry, and they pursued their project of refinement by writing patriotic songs and music criticism, and through music education. Meanwhile, ordinary Americans were creating their own national music: whites satirized refinement in minstrel songs and fashioned distinctive regional variants on patriotic song, while African Americans and reformers, white and black, appropriated the patriotic sublime for their own goals.

Printed music and news of wartime victories from the War of 1812 to the Mexican-American War played a central role in the popularization of patriotic music, including “The Star Spangled Banner,” which was an important moment in the early elaboration of the patriotic sublime. The culture of mid-century militiamen and their brass bands, and their role in civic life, constituted the apotheosis of the patriotic sublime. By the declaration of war with Mexico in 1846, the patriotic sublime was the dominant expression of American nationalism, and for many, especially white citizens, a triumphant and consensual assertion of America’s imperialist destiny.

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Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables and Illustrations	vii
<u>Chapters</u>	
Introduction	1
1. The Birth of the Patriotic Sublime, 1790-1815	19
2. Local Performance Spaces, National Musical Networks	84
3. National Music and American Identity, 1790-1848	131
4. The Brass Revolution: Volunteer Militia Bands and the Maryland Cadets in Boston, 1842	179
5. Get off the Track, Old Dan Tucker: Patriotic Music in Minstrelsy and Reform, 1828-1848	234
Epilogue	
The Sublime War: Patriotic Music in the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848	288
Conclusion	307
Bibliography	314
Curriculum Vita	355

Tables and Illustrations

Tables

4.1	Proportion of Brass Instruments in Wind Bands, 1801-1851	196
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Figures

1.1	Benjamin Carr, <i>La Marseillois</i>	29
1.2	William Billings, “ <i>Chester</i> ”	43
1.3	John Bower, <i>A View of the Bombardment of Fort McHenry</i>	56
1.4	Francis Scott Key, “ <i>Defence of Fort McHenry</i> ”	58
1.5	Francis Scott Key, “ <i>The Star Spangled Banner</i> ”	61
1.6	<i>Variations on “The Star Spangled Banner”</i>	64
1.7	<i>Sheet Music for “The Star Spangled Banner”</i>	78
1.8	<i>Sheet Music for “Hull’s Victory”</i>	80
2.1	<i>Eastern United States</i>	104
2.2	<i>Map of Cincinnati, 1819, With Parade Route.</i>	116
2.3	Lucas Fielding, <i>Plan of Baltimore, 1832, With Parade Routes</i>	127
2.4	<i>Sheet Music for “Carrollton’s March”</i>	129
3.1	Thomas Moore, <i>Sheet Music for “Believe Me if All These Endearing Young Charms”</i>	140
3.2	Daniel MacLise, <i>Illustration for Thomas Moore’s “Go Where Glory Waits Thee”</i>	142
3.3	Louis-Antoine Jullien, <i>Sheet Music for “American Quadrille”</i>	164
3.4	Louis-Antoine Jullien, “ <i>American Quadrille,</i> ” “ <i>Yankee Doodle</i> ” <i>Variation</i>	165
3.5	<i>Monsieur Matthieu Leading a Small Orchestra</i>	171

3.6	<i>Broadside of “Hunters of Kentucky”</i>	173
3.7	<i>Sheet Music for “The Arkansaw Traveler”</i>	176
4.1	<i>Keyed Bugle</i>	193
4.2	<i>Cornopean and Two-Valved Trumpet.</i>	195
4.3	<i>The Boston Brass Band</i>	200
4.4	<i>Sheet Music for “Captain Deem’s March”</i>	205
4.5	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Winslow Blues’ Quickstep”</i>	209
4.6	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Maryland Cadets’ Glee,” 1838</i>	220
4.7	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Maryland Cadets’ Glee,” 1839</i>	221
5.1	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Evenings at Home”</i>	236
5.2	<i>Sheet Music for “Universal Medley”</i>	242
5.3	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Zip Coon”</i>	246
5.4	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Negro Medley”</i>	253
5.5	<i>Sheet Music for Cover “Crow Quadrilles”</i>	265
5.6	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “The Celebrated Ethiopian Melodies”</i>	266
5.7	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Jim Brown”</i>	267
5.8	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Get Off the Track!”</i>	280
5.9	<i>“Cold Water Army,” Connecticut Temperance Society</i>	286
6.1	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Santa Anna’s Retreat from Cerro Gordo”</i>	299
6.2	<i>Sheet Music Cover for “Monterey, a National Song”</i>	301

—Introduction—

A cold autumnal rain pelted the crowds that thronged the streets of Cincinnati, Ohio on November 9, 1843 to witness former President John Quincy Adams lay the cornerstone for the Cincinnati Observatory on Mount Ida (shortly thereafter renamed Mount Adams), one of seven hills that ringed the bowl of the young city. The heavy rain played havoc with the ceremonial procession as it wound its way up the steep side of the hill; militia companies, trade societies, and the press of citizens slipped and slid in clinging mud. The rain cut Adams' speech, and the festivities, short, but Cincinnatians' celebratory and patriotic mood, dampened during the day, burst out later than night. Adams was escorted to a temperance dinner in a torchlight procession, and the city rang with the "sights and sounds" of celebration: "carriages rattled, peopled tramped, torch-lights gleamed, and the streets was filled with the sounds of martial music."¹

Adams, fresh from his congressional defense of the right of petition, and thus abolitionism, had traveled from Boston on a procession to the West through New York and Ohio by train, lake steamer, and river barge, stopping frequently to receive the cheers

¹ "Last Evening," *Cincinnati Weekly Herald and Philanthropist*, November 15, 1843; Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. XI (Philadelphia, 1876), 426. Paul C. Nagel, *John Quincy Adams: A Public Life, A Private Life* (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House, 2012), 394-398.

of fervent crowds.² In Erie, Pennsylvania a “band of music” and a “firemen’s torchlight parade” welcomed him to town; in Columbus, Ohio, it was “the German companies, with a band of martial music.” The downpour in Cincinnati did not prevent at least one “band of music” from performing in the muddy procession, and the previous night, at an inn in Lebanon north of Cincinnati, a band accompanying a traveling circus cheered Adams. After the Cincinnati ceremonies, the former president crossed the river to Covington, Kentucky, where he was “received at the landing by an immense crowd, which immediately formed a procession, and marched, with a military company and martial music, to the Episcopal church.” On his return journey to the East, Adams was stopped in Marietta, Ohio by “the usual demonstrations of welcome – a great crowd of people, guns fired, bells rung...”³ The sound of patriotism was the music of bands and the boom of guns.

Patriotic music, especially “martial” or military music, was a central feature of annual celebratory days like the Fourth of July and Washington’s Birthday. But music of national celebration also permeated everyday life in the early United States to an extent that would seem very unfamiliar to us, suffusing performative culture in almost all genres and venues. It was the familiar center of civic street life, the aural key to antebellum America’s burgeoning militia culture. It was an important aspect of music in the home, an

² In Cincinnati, Adams was greeted by a banner unfurled across the east end of 6th Street as the procession left the city proper: “John Quincy Adams, the Able Defender of the Rights of Man,” held up by a concourse of Cincinnati’s black citizens. “This was well done by the colored people,” opined the sympathetic *Weekly Herald and Philanthropist* on November 15. See Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 62; Harlow G. Unger, *John Quincy Adams: A Life* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2012), 304-305; Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London, New York: Verso, 1990), 84-90.

³ All quotes in the paragraph are from C.F. Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 417, 423, 426, 432. The story of the circus at the still-existing Golden Lamb in Lebanon, Ohio is from Andrew Oliver, *Portraits of John Quincy Adams and his Wife* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970), 227.

edificatory ideal in education, and present in settings as diverse as genteel assembly rooms and the minstrel stage. Special occasions like the 1843 Cincinnati Observatory dedication were not complete without martial music, but Americans performed and listened to patriotic music throughout the year as the commonplace accompaniment to everyday life.

Citizens in antebellum America expressed nationalist sentiment through music, and they elaborated an affective valence of patriotism I call the “patriotic sublime.” It had its roots in the enlightenment concept of the sublime: the feelings of awe, terror, and inspiration that arose from the sensory experience of phenomena as diverse as natural scenery, violent weather, and warfare. The intense response characteristic of sublimity was thought to indicate moral and aesthetic sensibility, finely tuned by a civic humanist education. According to thinkers such as Edmund Burke, the attainment of refined taste made the sublime accessible.⁴ In the hands of antebellum Americans, the sublime became the affective dimension of music, in principle to be experienced by performers and audiences alike. It was also decidedly martial: associated with the sounds and images of martial virility and military triumph in war. It depended in part on remembrances of the heroic national past, especially in the Revolution and its confirmation in the War of 1812. The narrative of the American past commemorated the citizen-warrior protecting his land and his liberties: the yeoman farmer, suffused with republican virtue, who took up arms against the oppressor. Such remembrances of the past were “largely an artifact of the

⁴ Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics, and the Subject* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 81-82, 90-91; Luke Gibbons, *Edmund Burke and Ireland: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Colonial Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 56; Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 5th edition (London, 1767), 29-33, 286-287.

present” confirmed through the music, entertainments, and civic celebrations of the early nineteenth century.⁵

In the decades between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, these musical evocations of the past also produced a narrative or a myth of the present: a martial reverie that centered most distinctively on volunteer militia companies, with their military bearing, precision drill, fine uniforms, and, always, their stirring music. This narrative placed the present in its proper relationship to the past *and* to the future. Although America’s past lacked the patina of time “immemorial,” it was dynamic. Europeans lived “amidst ruins, which mark former greatness,” and “scenes indicating present decay,” but America’s victories in 1783 and 1815 augured a glorious future – a future that would be midwived by the brave republican citizens of the post-revolutionary generation.⁶ This “mythic present” ignored certain unpleasant truths, especially sectional discord and racial strife. It imagined instead a polity unified by colorful and emotional displays of proudly martial patriotism.⁷ Often supported by the warlike sounds of military drill and gunfire, the striking music of the patriotic sublime was integral to the mythic present: it heightened the impact of patriotic celebration as word and image alone could not.

The mythic present pointed forward to a perceived national destiny, one that by the 1840s looked west to the Pacific and southwest toward Mexico, and it purported to

⁵ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xvi; see also 39-49.

⁶ Unlike Europeans who lived amid “scenes indicating present decay,” America’s recent past presaged “the promised sunshine of the future.” Cadwallader D. Colden, *Memoir, prepared at the request of a Committee of the Common Council of the city of New York and presented to the Mayor of the city at the celebration of the completion of the New York Canals* (New York, 1825), 77, quoted in David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 108-109.

⁷ Anthropologist Claire Farrar seems to have coined the term “mythic present.” For Farrar, the mythic present is a “copresence of events....both the Long Ago and the Now are present together in thought, song, narrative, everyday life, and certainly in religious and ritual life.” Claire R. Farrar, *Thunder Rides a Black Horse: Mescalero Apaches and the Mythic Present* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1994), 2.

represent a generalized consent to the expansionary ideals of republicanism. If the idea of Thomas Jefferson's "empire of liberty" had been confirmed for some by the victories of the United States in two wars, it remained for patriotic citizens after the War of 1812 to further vindicate the nation's imperial destiny. In practice, this meant the vast westward migration of white settlers and the consequent horrors of the Jacksonian policies of Indian Removal, as well as the racial tensions resulting from admission of new states into the Union. Sidelining these conflicts and tensions, the narrative of the mythic present focused, for example, on the annexation of Texas and the flexing of imperialist muscle in Algiers, Cuba, and Mexico. The patriotic sublime reinforced the mythic present by creating a sense of immediacy: patriotic fervency at the point of the sword. In the context of the demonstrations of patriotism that filled America's streets, public squares, theaters, and concert halls in the 1830s and 1840s, the musical patriotic sublime was less concerned with adherence to a particular party or creed (to say nothing of the experiences of black slaves or American Indians) than with the physical and emotional dimensions of patriotic unity: what historian David Bell has described as the "horizontal, affective bonds that join citizens to each other."⁸

The patriotic sublime invited all republican citizens to participate vicariously in these triumphs, even in peacetime, but this fraternity was generally imagined as white. Despite its implied racial exclusions, blacks and their supporters participated in their own versions of patriotic celebration by appropriating patriotic music, even martial music and

⁸ David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 18-19; see also Francois Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father: Washington's Legacy, Slavery, and the Making of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 22-23; Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007). On imperialist popular culture during the Mexican War, see Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

displays for abolitionist celebrations and black holidays like Emancipation Day in New York. Other variations on patriotic celebration also tended to complicate the proudly military and masculine valence of the patriotic sublime. Blackface minstrels inserted patriotic music into their popular and racist sendups of the cultural *mores* of black slaves, northern free blacks, immigrants, and others, while whites appropriated minstrel songs for their martial music. Reformers of sacred music, education advocates, and temperance movements all performed patriotic music in ways that accessed the patriotic sublime in different ways. The triumphalism of the patriotic sublime, which in the service of imperialism verged on propaganda, also opened doors for parody, dissent, and appropriation.

The patriotic sublime understood as “musical event” enabled performers and audiences to interpret the immediate context of music, including visual displays like flags, guns, uniforms, sheet music covers, and other patriotic imagery, in ways that emphasized unity, emotion, and even physicality.⁹ Music was, and is, an aural experience, and the music of the patriotic sublime was often accompanied by the sounds of cannon and gun fire, and of militiamen on drill: shouted commands, the clack of muskets, and field music—the fife, drum, and bugle. This martial soundscape complemented patriotic music and heightened the impact of lyrics by associating them with battle and military life. Some historians have said that sound as a central cultural experience diminished as literacy increased in the nineteenth century, and others that

⁹ I am indebted to music sociologist Tia Denora for the concept of the “musical event,” comprising not only music and its performance, but all of the spatial and sensory elements that surrounded it. See Tia Denora, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49 and *passim*. Howard Becker’s notion of interconnected “art worlds” has also been of great importance to my thinking: see Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1982] 2008). On music, the body, and physical gestures, see Denora, *After Adorno*, 47-48; Rolf Inge Godoy and Marc Leman, eds., *Musical Gestures: Sound, Music, and Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

regional song contributed to sectional conflict. I instead argue that musical and martial sounds together with lyrics created a new expression of patriotism in antebellum America: the patriotic sublime.¹⁰

The new musicology of the past several decades has emphasized multidisciplinary social and cultural study, moving away from treatments of music solely from the perspective of its formal properties. Musicologists better understand how music, particularly popular or commercial music, influences the larger culture and *vice versa*.¹¹ For the most part, however, musicologists have tended to treat nationalist music in the context of independent musical genres or microhistorical studies of single songs, individual performers, and specific genres, or they briefly gloss it in larger synthetic histories.¹² From the other direction, historians have usefully integrated song into their

¹⁰ Richard Cullen Rath, *How Early America Sounded* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Mark M. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Peter Charles Hoffer, "When Sound Mattered," *Reviews in American History* 32 (June 2004): 144-150. See also Amy S. Greenberg, "Marshaling the Imaginary, Imagining the Martial: Or, What Is at Stake in the Cultural Analysis of War?" in Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr., *The Martial Imagination: Cultural Aspects of American Warfare* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013).

¹¹ See Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, Richard Middleton, eds., *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Celia Applegate, "Introduction: Music Among the Historians," *German History* 30 (September 2012): 329-349; Jane F. Fulcher, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹² The best current musical history of the United States is Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: Norton, [2001] 2005). Crawford provides a thoughtful analysis of some aspects of patriotic music (see especially chapters 13-14), but is necessarily limited in this respect by the scope of his synthesis. Earlier syntheses in this vein include Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: Norton, 1983); H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988); and Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to Present* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). Excellent examples of tightly focused musicological studies include Susan Key, "Sound and Sentimentality: Nostalgia in the Songs of Stephen Foster," *American Music* 13 (Summer 1995): 145-166; John Spitzer, "'Oh! Susanna': Oral Transmission and Tune Transformation," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41 (Spring 1994): 90-136; Katherine Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825-60* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Corinne E. Blackmer, Patricia Juliana Smith, eds., *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); William Gibbons, "'Yankee Doodle' and Nationalism," *American Music* 26 (July 2008): 246-274; Liam Riordan, "'Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be?': The

analysis. Scholars such as Nicole Eustace and Sarah Knott have used music to connect the early national history of sensibility and the emotions to the formation of political loyalties and the creation of nationalist narratives of unity, conflict, and war,¹³ while David Waldstreicher and Simon Newman, among others, have incorporated music into their studies of nationalist celebratory practices.¹⁴ But this literature focuses largely on written texts and in so far as it uses music illustratively, it focuses on lyrics. My study contributes to both bodies of scholarship through systematic attention to lyric, tune, and practice.

Paying attention to how Americans played patriotic music addresses the aural qualities of music. This is important in three ways: it provides a fuller explanation of patriotic music's popularity among so many different groups of Americans; it makes clear why patriotic music was an important part of performative culture in many genres and venues; and, not least, it helps to recover a neglected, yet central cultural form in nineteenth-century America: the wind or brass band. My study addresses the formal properties and sonic qualities of music as distinctive features of expressive culture, and

Urban Early Republic and the Politics of Popular Song in Benjamin Carr's *Federal Overture*," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Summer 2011). An important study that treats nationalism and popular song in the French Revolution is Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). An older but still useful study treating march music is Warren D. Allen, *Our Marching Civilization: An Introduction to the Study of Music and Society* (New York: Da Capo Press, [1943] 1978).

¹³ Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), and *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

¹⁴ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). See also Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father*.

considers instrumentation, the visual aspects of musical performance, and the impact of different venues on the cultural meaning of music. I also strongly assert the agency of performers and audiences in generating what was perceived to be a fervently emotional patriotism through music.

This study also focuses on the connections between musical performance and print. Thus, it highlights, as many scholars have, the importance of print culture in nation-building. The transmission and dissemination of music through print networks and through oral transmission by traveling performers heightened its significance in the construction of group identity. Benedict Anderson has famously identified nationalism with print capitalism through print's role in the construction of an "imagined community." Print allowed conceptualization of the nation by making possible the imagining of simultaneous events occurring in homogenous, calendrical time. People in widely separated geographical areas could, through print, envision the same event – for example, a military victory – and fill that event with meaning. Scholars such as Michael Warner and David Waldstreicher have since refined Anderson's conception by positioning print as an active participant in creating nationalist meaning out of local political events.¹⁵ Rapidly expanding networks of print allowed Americans to disseminate printed music broadly throughout the nation, in newspapers, songsters, broadsides, and especially sheet music, at the same time they performed it live.¹⁶

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*; Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*.

¹⁶ Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Allan Pred, *Urban*

The period from 1790 to 1848 was one of rapid change for the young nation, and musical culture was no exception: the elaboration of the patriotic sublime depended on the construction of civic and commercial venues for musical performance, changes in the technology of music, and the increasing integration of consumer markets. With the transformation of America's transportation and communication systems came the beginning of a century-long shift from temporary to permanent spaces for music, together with the expansion of the printed music industry. Patriotic music was also transformed by a parallel *technological* revolution: the shift from woodwind to brass instruments in band music. Music historians have treated performance practices, genres and styles of music, and technologies of music performance and transmission as discrete cultural fields.¹⁷ This study maintains instead that musical spaces were series of interconnected locales of civic, commercial, and domestic performance, in which the "rich symbolic language and material practices [of] subcommunities" of performers and audiences wove together different kinds of music to generate sonic signifiers of national identities.¹⁸ Distinctive but interconnected performance spaces arose from the contingent practices, symbols, and experiences of performers and audiences who clustered in individual places and then moved between them. Musicians quickly built rough and ready theaters, repurposing existing spaces such as taverns or private homes, performed in streets and public squares,

Growth and City-System Development in the United States, 1840-1860 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

¹⁷ See for example Katherine K. Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825-1860*; Gillian M. Rodger, *Champaign Charlie and Pretty Jemima: Variety Theater in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, IL, 2010).

¹⁸ Dell Upton, *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 9-12. Upton, drawing from the histories of the interconnected work of small scientific communities, calls this process *intercalation*, in the context of "urban cultural change." See also Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), chapters 1,4; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), especially 14-42; Simon Gunn, Robert J. Morris, eds., *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001).

erected temporary civic spaces, played music in the private space of the home, and found new ways to commoditize music on paper, and, especially, to transform the *sound* of patriotic music.

My study traces the patriotic sublime in war and peace, from 1790 to the invasion of Mexico in 1846-1848. Baltimore, Maryland and Cincinnati, Ohio provide dual foci for the story of affective patriotic display, but my study branches out from those two urban centers to consider the national scope of the patriotic sublime, including the communication and commercial links that knitted patriotic practices into similar patterns across the country.

In antebellum America, musical performance could remain locally distinct and yet participate in an emerging national patriotic culture, through for example traveling militia bands, tours by theatrical companies or individual stars, and local newspaper reportage of musical events elsewhere. Baltimore's commercial theaters and its flourishing culture of military music was representative of the performance practices of the nation at large. But it also indicated the city's uneasy position on the contested cultural border between north and south. Baltimore, with the largest population of free blacks in the nation, reflected increasing racial tensions in urban centers both north and south. At the same time, its theaters were conduits for cultural exchange traveling from East to West, while its volunteer militia culture was an important part of cultural exchange between New England and the mid-Atlantic states. Cincinnati and its hinterlands were similarly affected by racial and sectional division. In addition, it represented ideals of the frontier West.¹⁹

¹⁹ On antebellum Baltimore and Cincinnati, see especially Gary Lawson Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation, 1789-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port:*

Archival research has enabled me to build a picture of musical life in Baltimore and Cincinnati as well as their regional and national links. In those two cities, I utilize military records, theatrical records, and minute books and journals from volunteer militia companies. Published and unpublished memoirs provide rich data from the perspective of performers; for example, theatrical memoirs offer unique authorial voices that allow me to trace the development of cultural tropes specific to the western states. Printed music is a central source, especially sheet music, as well as broadsides, songsters, school songbooks, and hymnbooks. All were produced for diverse musical constituencies in the rapidly expanding antebellum market for printed music. Newspapers and other periodical literature are a central resource, especially literary magazines and the small but growing selection of magazines devoted specifically to music. I rely primarily on newspapers and magazines published in Cincinnati and Baltimore, but publications from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and various small towns and cities allow me to trace the elaboration and geographic dissemination of patriotic musical practices in war and peacetime.

Genteel men in the early Republic wanted to inculcate refinement in the mass of citizens as a key component of their project of republican nation-building. Chapter One explores this project, using Francis Scott Key and the composition and dissemination of “The Star Spangled Banner” as a case study. The chapter begins with the fraught political battles of the 1790s, when Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans used music as a

The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Stephen J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788-1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Walter Stix Glazer, *Cincinnati in 1840: The Social and Functional Organization of an Urban Community During the Pre-Civil War Period* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999). For music in Baltimore and Cincinnati, see Lubov Keefer, *Baltimore's Music: The Haven of the American Composer* (Baltimore: J.H. Furst Company, 1962); Robert C. Vitz, *The Queen and the Arts: Cultural Life in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1989).

partisan cudgel to express what they thought constituted true patriotic sentiment. I then explore other patriotic songs in martial and religious settings before the War of 1812. The War of 1812, which many saw as a confirmation of America's triumphant revolutionary past, was a key moment in the elaboration of the patriotic sublime, and as the final section of the chapter shall show, "The Star Spangled Banner" was a prime example. Its performance heightened the impact of evocative martial lyrics, inviting audiences to participate imaginatively and through the senses in this epic battle that defined the nation. The chapter also traces the rapid dissemination of "The Star Spangled Banner" in and then beyond Baltimore to other regions of the country. The popularity of "The Star Spangled Banner" is an important demonstration of the mutually reinforcing cultural effects of musical performance and print.

In the second chapter I focus on how Americans elaborated musical culture through their inventive creation and use of musical spaces. Historians usually categorize music performance spaces by genre: for example, opera houses; concert halls for unstaged music; theaters; churches for sacred music; and so forth. This chapter instead examines the connections among these rapidly evolving musical venues. We usually associate patriotic music with civic spaces, especially streets, public squares, and parks. But patriotic music was also performed in a wide variety of commercial spaces, including theaters, music stores where people purchased sheet music and instruments, private music schools, taverns, and public gardens. These civic and commercial venues also interacted with domestic settings and private places of sociability, where men and women mixed patriotic music with other genres in their parlors and ballrooms. The development of the patriotic sublime was tied to the proliferation of all these places of musical performance

and the practices that unified them. Songs like “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Hail, Columbia,” as well as uncounted lesser-known songs, ballads, marches, quicksteps, galops, quadrilles, and other patriotic music in almost every genre, were played in streets, homes, taverns, theaters, circuses, assembly rooms, singing schools, churches, and other spaces, and were reproduced in sheet music, portable songsters, broadsides, school songbooks, and hymn collections. If Americans built a national past by memorializing it on July Fourth and Washington’s Birthday and during one-time commercial and civic celebrations, they strengthened it through day-to-day performance. The flexible utilization of patriotic performance on days both sanctified and ordinary played a large role in the eventual elaboration of a mythic present and the patriotic sublime.

As American tastemakers considered the import of the musical culture they were helping to build, they engaged in a discourse about what constituted “national music,” taking as models the music of European countries, especially Ireland and Scotland, rooted in what they perceived as immemorial, even if premodern or barbaric, custom. Chapter Three examines this discourse and its relationship to the performance of patriotic music by ordinary Americans, who were not overly concerned with abstruse theories about national music. Musical tastemakers considered much American music-making to be imitative, crass, or altogether too commercial, and the discourse of national music became entangled in the broader project of national cultural uplift: educating and refining the broad mass of republican citizens. The chapter also tracks the creation of regional music in the booming West, with its picaresque figures: self-made and self-reliant, sometimes even hustlers or tricksters, celebrated as exemplars of American identity.²⁰

²⁰ Constance Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (New York: Published by the New York Review of Books, [1931] 2004); Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of*

Military music, consisting of the field music of fifes and drums and the music of wind bands, was a central expression of the patriotic sublime, and the subject of my fourth chapter. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the wind band underwent a seismic shift. The sound of bands was transformed by a revolution in instrument technology, as bands shifted from primarily woodwind instrumentation to new kinds of brass instruments, culminating in the full-fledged military brass band. Simultaneously, the volunteer militia remade itself from the oft-derided statutory militia of the early Republic into the proud and respectable masculine associations of the Mexican War. Volunteering in militia companies was a way for white males to claim republican citizenship and genteel status. In the process, white males excluded blacks and immigrants, who asserted claims to respectability and citizenship through volunteer associations of their own.²¹ Volunteer bands drew on music from a variety of sources and also performed broadly, putting on genteel concerts and balls in addition to specifically performances. They became central symbols of America's new sublime patriotism.

Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); William Osborne, *Music in Ohio* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004); Matthew Rebhorn, *Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Andrew R. L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1986).

²¹ On the American militia, see Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers & Civilians: The Martial Spirit in American, 1775-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968); Lawrence D. Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan, 1983); James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Maiden, MA: Wiley Blackwell., [1982] 2015). On constructions of martial masculinity and citizenship, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Peter Guardino, "Gender, Soldiering, and Citizenship in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848," *American Historical Review* 119 (February 2014): 23-46. On band music, see Richard K. Hansen, *The American Wind Band: A Cultural History* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2005); Ralph Thomas Dudgeon, *The Keyed Bugle* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, [1993] 2004); Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800-1920* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987); Kenneth E. Olson, *Music and Musket: Bands and Bandsmen of the American Civil War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

Chapter Four focuses on one volunteer company from Baltimore, the Maryland Cadets, who borrowed the brass band of another Baltimore company, the Independent Blues, when they took a summer tour of Boston in 1842. The Maryland Cadets' visit to Boston is an ideal case study of the institutionalization of patriotic music, its technology, and its accompanying patriotic rituals. Militia band members came from a range of middle class and professional backgrounds, including professional musicians who often acted as bandleaders. Association with volunteer militias allowed musicians to assert the same sort of masculine citizenship as other volunteers. The traveling militia band also shows how men's fraternal associations connected local practices in places like Baltimore and Cincinnati to one another and into the national fabric, weaving performance into an interconnected cultural field. Of course, the unity the volunteers purported to represent was not universal: they were limited to elites and middling sorts striving for upward class mobility. Just as important, they represented white racial supremacy in an increasingly imperialistic nation.

Groups who diverged from this unified white supremacist idea of the nation appropriated the patriotic sublime for alternative purposes. By the Jacksonian period, claimants with dissenting visions of national life and the virtuous citizen used patriotic music to advocate for social reform and racial equality, and even to subvert notions of white middle class uplift. My fifth chapter considers two such dissenting forms of patriotic music, blackface minstrelsy and the music of the abolitionist and temperance movements, using a series of case studies: the Hutchinson Family Singers, the minstrel innovator Daniel Decatur Emmett, and the Washingtonian temperance movement, founded in Baltimore in 1843. In addition, it explores the little-known phenomenon of

black military bands by focusing on the African-American musical genius Francis Johnson, who performed patriotic music for both white and black audiences. These case studies will shed light on the tension between patriotic expression and political (and racial) division in white America. They also demonstrate how dissenting social groups could recast the patriotic sublime and its music in the service of radical answers to current social problems. Their music-making appropriated the mythic present of martial music in order to expose the conflicts it usually elided.²²

Disparate visions of patriotism, race, and national destiny sharpened in the 1840s. As the popularity of blackface minstrelsy and reform music skyrocketed, Americans argued fiercely over territorial expansion in the Southwest and specifically over the admission of Texas into the Union. These debates over Western expansion and its implications for the fate of slavery polarized the nation and created political stalemate.

²² The best cultural interpretations of minstrelsy are Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, 20th anniv. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); see also David D. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London, New York: Verso, 1991); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London, New York: Verso, 2003); Robert C. Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mark: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Annemarie Bean, James V. Hatch, Brooks McNamara, *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth-Century Blackface Minstrelsy* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996); Ken Emerson, *Doo-dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Robert C. Nowatzki, "Our Only True National Poets': Blackface Minstrelsy [*sic*] and Cultural Nationalism," *ATQ* 20, no. 1 (Mar 1, 2006): 361-378. On the Hutchinson Family, see Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Reform* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Dale Cockrell, *Excelsior: Journals of the Hutchinson Family Singers, 1842-1846* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1989). Hans Nathan's classic study of minstrelsy focusing on Dan Emmett is still indispensable: Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962). On Francis Johnson, see Charles Kelley Jones, *Francis Johnson (1792-1844): Chronicle of a Black Musician in Early Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2006); Crawford, *America's Musical Life*; Keith Wilson, "Black Bands and Black Culture: A Study of Black Military Bands in the Union Army During the Civil War," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 9, no. 1 (July, 1990): 31-37. On the Washingtonians, see Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Edgar L. Venzke, *The Temperance Movement in Maryland, 1825-1918* (Baltimore, 1947).

But when the United States goaded Mexico into war in 1846, an explosion of patriotic fervor followed. I end my study by considering expressions of the patriotic sublime during the Mexican War, at home and on the field of battle.

To be sure, abolitionists and other political and ideological opponents of the Polk administration who objected to the territorial expansion of slavery dissented from the War.²³ Dissent may even have been powerful enough, as Amy Greenberg has argued, to have “defused” a “movement to annex all of Mexico.”²⁴ Still, antiwar sentiment was not the norm: it was overpowered by the surge of bellicose patriotism that accompanied the beginning of the war and on the whole, patriotic music tended to elide regional and political difference.

By the time the United States invaded Mexico in the mid-1840s, the patriotic sublime was becoming the default mode of American patriotism. Not all Americans shared the patriotic ardor that greeted the declaration of war in 1846, but they did share a patriotic narrative of the origins of the nation in heroic revolutionary war. They were also thoroughly familiar with the musical sublime and its fraught-feeling states of awe and wonder. The paradox of a deeply divided politics that appealed to the same patriotic memories, rituals, and emotions was already evident and perhaps most deeply expressed in patriotic music. That paradox illuminates the great convulsion a decade later. The Civil War exposed gaping social wounds in American society, making the battle over the cultural meaning of a shared past and who could claim a national identity through connection to it even more significant to future generations of Americans.

²³ Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Knopf, 2012); Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 66; John H. Schroeder, *Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973); see also Walters, *American Reformers*, 95-96.

²⁴ Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, xvii.

—Chapter One—

The Birth of the Patriotic Sublime, 1790-1815

The 1,000 spectators in the audience at Baltimore's circus, a refurbished wood frame theater on Philpot's Hill near the intersection of Pratt and Albemarle, enjoyed a performance on Saturday April 14, 1798 that included feats of horsemanship, dancing, and tumbling, as well as farcical plays and a variety of music, including at one point "several of our own favorite tunes," as the Baltimore *Federal Gazette* reported early the following week. But the band then made the mistake of striking up "La Marseillaise," the French revolutionary anthem that had become popular in the United States over the previous decade. It was met with "violent hissing and hooting" that drowned out the musicians, forcing the song to a halt. Calls for the "President's March" and "Yankee Doodle" rang through the hall and the band hastily complied, with the ringing approval of

the audience. As tensions with France mounted in 1798, patriotic song loudly signaled where the local polity's support lay.¹

More than sixteen years later, a different enemy impelled the writing of another patriotic song, this time in the midst of actual battle. On the night of September 13, 1814, Private Isaac Munro, a volunteer in the garrison of Baltimore's Fort McHenry, suffered with his fellow soldiers under the guns of several British mortar vessels, which had already been bombarding the fort for the better part of a day as part of the British attack on Baltimore. Fresh from their victory at Bladensburg and the burning of Washington, the British expected Baltimore to be similarly easy prey, but the outcome of the attack on Fort McHenry remained uncertain that night.² Francis Scott Key, an attorney from Georgetown, witnessed the bombardment: he was aboard one of the British vessels, trying to negotiate the release of a prisoner. Munro, in civilian life one of the editors of the daily newspaper the *Baltimore Patriot*, later narrated the experience of what he called "by far the most tremendous bombardment ever known [from] this enemy." The cannonade continued "til dawn of day" on September 14, when the British finally withdrew. As Munro related, "our morning gun was fired, the flag hoisted, Yankee Doodle played, and we all appeared in full view of a formidable and mortified enemy."³ Key, meanwhile, was beginning to compose a song lyric about the assault. The song that

¹ *Baltimore Federal Gazette*, April 17, 1798; *Philadelphia Gazette*, April 19, 1798; John Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 681, 689.

² For details of the assault on Baltimore and its context in the War of 1812, see Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Hickey, *Don't Give Up the Ship! Myths of the War of 1812* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Walter Lord, *The Dawn's Early Light* (New York: Norton, 1972); Walter R. Borneman, *1812: The War That Forged a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004); J.C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

³ Scott S. Sheads, "'Yankee Doodle played': A Letter from Baltimore, 1814," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 76, no. 4 (Winter 1981), 380-382. Hereafter cited as "Munro."

so memorably described the attack on Fort McHenry and its triumphant end quickly became known as “The Star Spangled Banner.”

In the two and a half decades between the ratification of the Constitution and the end of the War of 1812, patriotic sentiment modulated to a new key. This chapter explores patriotic sentiment through music in the early national period, from its partisan uses during the highly charged 1790s to the later construction of an affective patriotism built around music meant to transcend partisan politics and enhance national unity. This new music was everywhere centered on martial display and narratives, and relied heavily on motifs characteristic of military music like marches. This music generated what I call the patriotic sublime.

In the 1790s and the first decade of the new century, affective attachment to the idea of an American nation was accompanied by the delineation of sharp boundaries between those perceived to legitimately express the nation’s ideals and those who were thought to betray those ideals. In this period of the French Revolution and continued conflict with Britain, nationalist sentiment needed an enemy. Americans expressed patriotism both by celebrating their brand of republican virtue and by defining their own national loyalties in terms of the perfidy of outsiders and opponents.⁴ The first section of this chapter covers the partisan use of early patriotic songs emerging in this contentious era. In the same period, some martial and religious uses of patriotic music foreshadowed the coming patriotic sublime, as genteel Americans tried to inculcate republican virtues amongst a broad polity. I examine this music in the second section.

The third section examines “The Star Spangled Banner” and the emergence of the

⁴ John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 4-5.

patriotic sublime during the War of 1812. During and after the war, Americans began to see patriotism as an emotional bond that drew them together as a national community, rather than as a “series of claims about political sovereignty,”⁵ and they articulated this “common membership in the nation”⁶ through “bursts of patriotic display.”⁷ “The Star Spangled Banner” repays close interpretation because of its striking martial imagery, its positioning of the auditor as eyewitness to battle, and its appropriation of a popular tune with some of the bombastic motifs of the march. This section also traces the rapid spread of Key’s song through print media and public performances. Historians debate the extent to which print capitalism formed smoothly functioning national markets in this period.⁸ Still, on the evidence of this chapter, news of American victories and poetic tributes to them, and their numerous subsequent reprintings in magazines, songsters, and sheet music, nourished the creation by the public of what Michael Warner has called a “national imaginary.”⁹ This was true even in regions of the country precariously attached to the national center.

⁵ David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, 18.

⁶ Ibid. See also Ernest Gellner, “Nationalism,” *Theory and Society* 10, no. 6 (Nov 1981): 753-776, and *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 1998); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2003).

⁷ Bonnie Menes, review of *Nations and Nationalism*, by Ernest Gellner, *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, no. 3 (Nov, 1985): 720-722.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; see also Jeffrey L. Pasley, “The Tyranny of Printers,” *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001); Allan R. Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities, 1790-1840*; Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father*, esp. 34-70; Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, esp. chapters 8, 9, 15, 18. Cf. Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), xix, chapter one *passim*.

⁹ Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 173.

The sublime described the complex of emotions thought to be evoked by terrible, awe-inspiring events or objects. In America, the concept was most often associated with eighteenth-century British aesthetics, especially in the philosophy of Edmund Burke.¹⁰ British writers on aesthetics occupied themselves throughout the eighteenth century in compiling detailed lists of objects that might produce the sensation of the sublime.¹¹ One important category was natural wonders. Americans, exploring their vast new natural world, found this kind of sublimity especially evocative, focusing their attention on awe-inspiring natural wonders like Niagara Falls or Virginia's Natural Bridge.¹² Sublime objects included conceptual as well as natural objects: "war" was prominent among them and, as early as 1747, John Baillie, in his *An Essay on the Sublime*, included "love of one's country" on his list. Significantly, Baillie also held that it was the job of the skillful writer to create a picture of the sublime by "painting to the imagination what nature herself offers to the senses."¹³

During the Early Republic, the sublime was intricately tied to the idea of "sensibility," or the refinement of the senses and feeling. Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner" was in part a product of late eighteenth century Anglo-American genteel literary culture, and the culture of refined sensibility. "Sensible" people

¹⁰ Tsang Lap-chuen, *The Sublime: Groundwork towards a Theory* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998), xiv-xv.

¹¹ What these lists have in common is "a description of sublimity which restricts the types and forms of experience that are held to be generative of sublime sensation." Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime*, 20. See also James Kirwan, *Sublimity: The Non-Rational and the Irrational in the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2005), chap. 1.

¹² Immanuel Kant is also closely associated with the theory of the sublime, especially as generated by wondrous nature. See Tsang, *The Sublime*, 7. On the American context, see Albert Furtwangler, *Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis and Clark Journals* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), chap. 2; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 45-47; and David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), chap. 2.

¹³ Andrew Ashfield, Peter de Bolla, eds. *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36, 38, 88.

demonstrated delicacy and good aesthetic judgment, but could also respond to their social and natural surroundings with properly calibrated emotions.¹⁴ Music in particular had a longstanding link to sensibility via its physiological effects: “by means of different musical sounds, various passions,” including the moral passions, could be “excited or calmed.”¹⁵

Genteel men of letters also set themselves up as cultural authorities. They saw themselves as leaders of a nation-building project that linked the stability of the new republic to the spread of sensibility among ordinary citizens. They wished to direct, as one historian puts it, a “virtuous social revolution” that was “middling and accommodationist.” In their vision of republican citizenship, then, sensibility acquired a “valence of patriotism.”¹⁶ The music written by genteel men of letters was an important dimension of their nationalist project of “uplift.” As we shall see, Francis Scott Key was motivated by his own brand of patriotism, informed by genteel culture and religion, to record what he understood as a sublime experience. The printers and editors who

¹⁴ Ibid, 32-34; Nicole Eustace, *Passion is the Gale*, 259-263, 267-271; Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1992), 80-81. On late eighteenth century genteel literary culture, see especially David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Bryan Waterman, *Republic of Intellect: The Friendly Club of New York City and the Making of American Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic: Cultivating Forums of Citizenship* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Larzer Ziff, *Writing in the New Nation: Prose, Print and Politics in the Early United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹⁵ Robert Whytt, *Observations on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of those Disorders which have been Commonly called Nervous Hypochondriac, or Hysteric, to which are prefixed some Remarks on the Sympathy of the Nerves* (Edinburgh, 1765), 10. See also Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 222.

¹⁶ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 20, 200-201. Knott points out Alfred F. Young's interpretation of the Constitution itself as accommodationist; see Young, “The Framers of the Constitution and the ‘Genius’ of the People,” *Radical History Review* 42 (Fall 1988), esp. 10, 17-18.

published and republished his song, and the song's readers and performers, were co-participants in the construction of the patriotic sublime during and after the War of 1812.

Tyrants, slaves, and corruption: patriotic music and political division, 1790-1812

The democratization of sensibility, well underway in the two decades before the War of 1812, was in the 1790s refracted through the prism of bitter acrimony that characterized partisan political expression. In that decade, patriotic music signaled one's support for Federalism or for the Jeffersonian party. Ironically, in an age that argued so vociferously against the evils of faction, patriotic music tended to exacerbate partisan differences. In an environment that rejected the legitimacy of political parties, partisanship was deeply personal, and people used patriotic music to express what often became rancorous "personal struggles over reputation."¹⁷ This was no less true among genteel political leaders, despite their hopes for a "virtuous social revolution," than it was of the partisan rank and file.¹⁸

Cheers and celebration greeted Edmond Charles Genêt, the new ambassador to the United States from republican France, when he disembarked in Charleston, South Carolina in the spring of 1793. It continued as he made his way north to the capital. Philadelphia's greeting was no less rapturous, prompting Genêt to register his thanks to the "crowds of citizens that flocked from every avenue of this city" to greet him at Grey's

¹⁷ Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 159; see also Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), esp. 2-3, 212.

¹⁸ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 8-9, 16, 20-21.

Ferry.¹⁹ The adulation Genêt engendered would pall within months as the impetuous Frenchman commissioned privateers, armed militias, and otherwise antagonized an administration committed to neutrality in the ongoing war between France and Britain, but for the time being he was the emotional symbol of true republican spirit – for many Americans, at least.

It is difficult to explain the passion aroused in America by the French Revolution in terms of the diplomatic needs or interests of the United States, as Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick have argued. Instead, the Revolution was thought by Jeffersonian Republicans to have sanctioned the outcome of the American colonists' own revolt against the British: after all, republican France espoused the same ideology as the new United States.²⁰ Still insecure in their new polity and lacking the sort of deep, mythologized national past that might otherwise have provided grist for the patriotic mill, Americans reacted passionately, in support and opposition, to the ideological ferment in France. Their particular interpretations of the political and philosophic ideals of revolutionary France could by extension demonstrate their own party's rectitude as the true republican inheritors of their own revolution.

Music anchored the feting of Genêt to Americans' use of the French Revolution to confirm the legitimacy of their own Revolution. Three French patriotic songs became particularly prominent symbols, to be either rapturously applauded or vilified: "La Marseillaise," "Le Ça Ira," and "La Carmagnole." The appropriation of "La Marseillaise"

¹⁹ Genêt's thanks specifically encompassed the commodities merchants who apparently tried to strike a deal with him for flour, more than 600,000 barrels worth, at bargain prices. *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), May 18, 1793.

²⁰ Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 308-309; see also Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

was especially significant. Its use as a patriotic signifier by Americans lasted far beyond the more ephemeral “Ça Ira” and “Carmagnole,” and it also speaks to the importance of print dissemination in the large urban areas of the United States. Eyes cast anxiously towards Europe, Americans not surprisingly expressed their own patriotism with reference to the Napoleonic Wars which their government was so anxious to avoid.

The lyrics of patriotic songs were couched largely in ideological terms familiar to the revolutionary generation. During his sojourn in Philadelphia, toasts during dinners in Genêt’s honor, which were often printed in newspapers, demonstrated this. All Philadelphia seemed to be entranced by the activities of the ambassador, and thus we have unusually detailed descriptions of these events. On May 18, a “republican dinner” was given at Revolutionary veteran Philip Oeller’s Hotel in honor of Genêt, attended by about 100 “French and French-American citizens.” A typical series of toasts was punctuated by “The Marseillaise hymn,” which was requested after the toasts and sung “with great taste and spirit, the whole company joining in the chorus.”²¹ It included two new stanzas, “replete with truly patriotic and republican sentiments,” composed by Genêt himself in honor of the French navy.²² At a similar dinner the following week, also at Oeller’s, artillery salutes, a ubiquitous accompaniment to martial and patriotic music, accompanied several toasts. These were also interspersed with four new patriotic songs; at least two newspapers subsequently published their lyrics. A typical stanza, like Genêt’s rendition of “La Marseillaise” replete with common republican sentiments, read “Let us

²¹ *Federal Gazette* (Philadelphia), May 22, 1793.

²² Ibid. See also W.A. Newman Dorland, “The Second Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 46, no. 182 (1922): 169. The *Federal Gazette*, published by Andrew Brown, was “presented...as an impartial alternative to the partisan press in Philadelphia.” See Mark A. Smith, “Andrew Brown’s ‘Earnest Endeavor’: The ‘Federal Gazette’s’ role in Philadelphia’s Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 120, no. 4 (Oct 1996): 322.

with France agree, / And bid the world be free / While tyrants fall / Let the rude savage host / In their vast numbers boast / Freedom's almighty truth / Laughs at them all." "La Marseillaise" was again a highlight, sung in both French and English.²³

The songs sung at dinners honoring citizen Genêt, and more generally the American appropriation of "La Marseillaise" and other French revolutionary songs, demonstrate patriotic sentiment aimed specifically at ideological enemies, both external and internal. Evidently newspaper editors were interested mostly in the ideological content of the lyrics sung at the June dinner: none of the four listed indicated a tune, and the songs do not seem to have long survived the event. These editors wanted to express a pro-French (and therefore anti-British, anti-Federalist) position at that particular moment. The lyrics of "La Marseillaise," contrasting the glorious French with the tyranny and savagery of the foe, suited the purpose well.

The "Marseillaise" was also one of the earliest examples of sheet music printed in the United States, issued by the Philadelphia musician, composer, and printer Benjamin Carr and probably copied from one of two London editions.²⁴ The first two pages translate the lyrics into English, underneath a simple piano accompaniment; the third page prints the melody alone, with the French lyrics (see Figure 1.1).²⁵ This third page, concentrating on the melody and printing all the lyrics on one page, resembles a broadside or the page of a songster. These were cheaper forms of printed music intended

²³ *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia, June 4), 1793; *Federal Gazette* (Philadelphia), June 5, 1793.

²⁴ The Carr family operated music stores in Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. In 1794, Carr would issue the first sheet music of "Yankee Doodle" printed in the United States. See Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 8-10.

²⁵ Musicologist Myron Gray provides an elegant and highly detailed musical analysis of this version of the "Marseillaise;" see Gray, "French Revolutionary Song for Federal Philadelphia," *commonplace.org* 13, vol. 2 (Winter, 2013).

90. 1-25

MARCHE DES MARSEILLOIS.

Allons, enfans de la Patrie le jour de Gloire est arrivé, Contre nous de la tyrannie, l'Enten-

dart Sanglant est levé l'entendart sanglant est levé entendez vous dans les campagnes mugir ces féroces Sol-

La General

dat, il viennent jusques dans vos bras; égorger vos fils, vos compagnes, aux armes Citoyens

fermez vos bataillons

Choeur

Marchez Marchez qu'un Sang im-pur a breuve nos Sillons. Mar-

chons Mar... chons Qu'un Sang impur a breuve nos Sil-lons.

2

Que veut cette horde d'esclaves,
De traîtres de rois conjures,
Pour qui ces ignobles entraves,
Ces fers des long tems prepares:
Français pour nous ah quel outrage
Quels transports il doit exciter
C'est nous qu'on ose méditer
De rendre à l'antique esclavage.
Aux Armes, &c.

4

Tremblez, tyrans, et vous perfides;
L'opprobre de tous les partis
Tremblez, vos projets parricides
Vont en fin recevoir leur prix:
Tout est soldats pour vous combattre
S'ils tombent nos jeunes héros,
La terre en produit de nouveaux
Contre vous tous prêts à se battre.
Aux Armes, &c.

3

Quoi! des cohortes étrangères
Feroient la loi dans nos foyers,
Quoi! ces phalanges mercenaires
Terrasseroient nos fiers guerriers:
Grand Dieu par des mains enchaînées
Nos fronts sous le joug se ploieroient
De vils despotes deviendroient
Les maîtres de nos destinées.
Aux Armes &c.

5

Français en guerriers magnanimes
Portez ou retenez vos coups,
Épargnez ces tristes victimes
A regret s'armant contre nous
Mais ces despotes sanguinaires
Mais les complices de boullé
Tous ces tigres qui sans pitié
Déchirent le sein de leur mère,
Aux Armes &c.

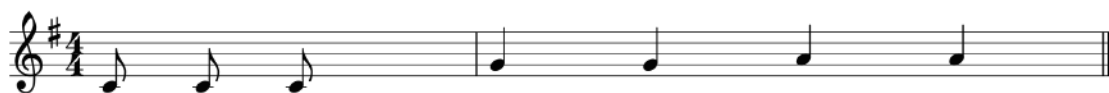
6

Amour sacré de la Patrie
Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs,
Liberté, Liberté chérie
Combats avec tes défenseurs:
Sous nos drapeaux que la victoire
Accoure à tes mâles accents
Que tes ennemis expirans
Voient ton triomphe et notre gloire.
Aux Armes, &c.

Figure 1.1. "La Marseillois," (Philadelphia: printed by Benjamin Carr, 1793). Keffer Collection of Sheet Music, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.

for broad distribution to the public – perfect media to pass out at a tavern or on the street for a sing-along. Sheet music for the piano, on the other hand, was a considered a luxury in the 1790s and purchased by elites to be played at home. The juxtaposition of the two versions suggests the democratization of sensibility, and likely Carr’s intention to popularize the “Marseillaise:” it reminded purchasers that this was a public, patriotic song.²⁶

“La Marseillaise” was also meant to be *sung*. A type of grand march characteristic of the period, its stately tempo and ringing, triumphant return to the major key in the refrain (“aux armes, Citoyens”) made for stirring performances. Such grand marches often featured a characteristic rhythm that Americans knew from the “President’s March,” which was the tune later borrowed for “Hail, Columbia,” and other patriotic songs. This dotted rhythm has long been considered a representation of the physical act of marching: it “appeal[s]...through the ear to a real or imaginary exercise of the muscles, as the drums excite soldiers to march.”²⁷ Benjamin Carr’s 1793 version of the dotted rhythm is an example of *notes inégales*, and is notated as follows:



Following the convention of *notes inégales*, readers of Carr’s 1793 sheet music edition of “La Marseillaise” would have converted the three pickup notes into a dotted rhythm, as the song is still sung and printed today. This performance practice transformed the notes

²⁶ A songster was a small, inexpensive book or pamphlet of song lyrics, designed for portability. See Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York, 1988), 144; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 231.

²⁷ C.F. Abdy Williams, *The Rhythm of Modern Music* (London: MacMillan, 1909), 91-92. Musicologists have associated this rhythm with the actual tread or fall of marching feet: see for example Lawrence Kramer, “Speaking of Music” in Keith Chapin and Andrew H. Clark, eds., *Speaking of Music: Addressing the Sonorous* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 29.

printed on the page into the infectious marching style of the dotted rhythm when sung in front of an audience. Transmission of songs through events like the dinners celebrating Citizen Genêt aligned printed sheet music with live performance.

In 1793-1794, the patriotic fervor inspired by the French Revolution spread beyond elite celebrations. French songs and republican symbols were central to the expression of politically-charged nationalist sentiment aimed at domestic foes who were identified with the French or English. Citizen Genêt's appearance in America occurred alongside the advent of the so-called Democratic-Republican societies, the first of which was organized in April of 1793 in Pennsylvania. The Democratic Society of Pennsylvania called for similar organizing throughout the nation, and by the end of 1794 there were at least 35 such societies throughout the country. These societies, vociferous in their support of the Republican interest but also suspiciously (to elites) popular in their membership, had the effect of radicalizing political debate, widening the rift between Republicans and Federalists.²⁸ To Republicans, "La Marseillaise" and similar songs came to signify true patriotism and simultaneously the perfidy of the opposition.

The commercial theater was a very important venue for the performance of patriotic music in this era, and attracted a much broader class constituency than elite dinners for the likes of Genêt. William Dunlap, author, gentleman, and theater impresario, described one theatrical performance in New York in 1793, at the John Street Theatre, attended by soldiers as well as civilians:

One of the side boxes was filled by French officers from the ships of war in the harbour. The opposite box was filled with American officers....French officers and soldier-sailors...and many of the New-York militia, artillery, infantry, and dragoons, mingled with the crowd in the pit....As soon as the musicians appeared in the

²⁸ Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 162-163; Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005), 40-42.

orchestra, there was a general call for '*ça ira*.' The band struck up. The French in the pit joined first, and then the whole audience. Next followed the Marseillois Hymn. The audience stood up. The French took off their hats and sung in a full and solemn chorus. The Americans applauded by gestures and clapping of hands....The hymn ended, shouts of '*Vivent les Français*,' '*Vivent les Américains*,' were reiterated until the curtain drew up...²⁹

The two French anthems had quickly become familiar, and the presence of the French officers and soldiers intensified the sense of ceremony, climaxed by ardent shouts in support of revolutionary France. Even at this early date, observers like Dunlap noted the heightened impact of patriotic music when it was combined with military signifiers like the French and American soldiers with their various uniforms.

Theatrical performance of patriotic music could become deeply contentious. Baltimore's short-lived spring theatrical season in 1793 featured one such divisive scene when "a number of *Scottish* and *British* shopkeepers...did lately order the band of music at the theatre to play '*God save Great George our King*.'"³⁰ The report lauded the forbearance of the crowd, who apparently refrained from attacking the pro-British audience members, who were, according to the partisan reporter, no better than "insignificant reptiles." More ominously, however, he extrapolates from this musical incident a "vast number of British agents" in the United States, bent on "rais[ing] up enemies...to pave the way for monarchy, and its handmaid, despotism." Musical performance directly precipitated this partisan ideological tirade.³¹

²⁹ William Dunlap, *A History of the American Theatre from its Origins to 1832* (New York, 1832, reissue Urbana: University of Illinois Press., 2005), 109.

³⁰ *The Apollo, or Chestertown Spy* (Chestertown, MD), May 24 1793. The title is of course an alternate first line for "God Save the King," even then considered the British national anthem.

³¹ The orchestra itself may have had a role in instigating this incident. In July of that year, the same company performed a benefit for the French refugees from Saint-Domingue who had recently settled in Baltimore. See David Ritchey, ed., *A Guide to the Baltimore Stage in the Eighteenth Century* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1982), 24.

Sometimes partisan feeling cloaked in patriotism led to violent confrontation between angry audience factions. At the Federalist-leaning theater on Federal Street in Boston, management was accused of encouraging pro-British sentiment through performances that lampooned the French. The character of Bagatelle in *The Poor Soldier*, a popular comic opera and a favorite of George Washington's, was thought by republicans to be "a libel on the character of the whole French nation," as William Dunlap reported.³² Noting the "high and furious" political rivalry "which pervaded almost every private as well as public concern," Dunlap described one performance that ended in mob violence when Republican supporters attempted to storm the theater.³³ Bagatelle was certainly a caricature, a French barber who unwisely challenges his master, Captain Fitzroy, an American patriot, to a duel.³⁴ Fitzroy demonstrates his superior rank and republican virtue at the climactic moment as he scornfully rejects his social inferior's challenge: "Get you gone. You had better stick to your spade than meddle with sword and pistol."³⁵ By late 1796, as tensions with France mounted, a black caricature named Domingo, "with a song in character," stood in for the controversial Bagatelle.³⁶

The genteel Joseph Hopkinson, lawyer and son of the signer of the Declaration of Independence Francis Hopkinson, wanted his new song, "Hail, Columbia," to overcome such partisanship. When the Federalist audience at the Baltimore circus, following

³² British ballad opera interspersed spoken dialogue with songs culled from a variety of sources, including popular, sacred, or patriotic songs of the day. For example, an American publication of *The Poor Soldier* included a song with lyrics set to a well-known military tune, "Pease on a Trencher." See John O'Keefe, *The Poor Soldier: A Comic Opera*, (Philadelphia, 1791), 24; Katherine Preston, *Opera on the Road*, 9, 39.

³³ Dunlap, *A History of the American Theatre*, 145.

³⁴ William B. Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage* (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), 119.

³⁵ John O'Keefe, *The Poor Soldier*, 26.

³⁶ *Polar Star and Boston Daily Advertiser* (Boston), January 1, 1797; Susan L. Porter, "English-American Interaction in American Musical Theater at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *American Music*, 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1986), 14.

Philadelphia's lead, shouted down "La Marseillaise" on April 14, 1798, they demanded the "President's March." Four days later, theater musicians in Philadelphia refused to play the pro-Federalist "President's March."³⁷ In response to these incidents, Hopkinson hastily wrote new lyrics to the tune of the "President's March," designed, as Hopkinson said, to highlight "the just and wise policy of President Washington, which was to do equal justice" to American supporters of France and England.³⁸ Gilbert Fox sang the new lyrics at Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre on April 25: the audience was wildly enthusiastic and demanded multiple encores.³⁹ They also picked up the lyrics quickly. By its second performance the next day, the encores were almost drowned out by the "enthusiast peals of applause" and singing along with the chorus by most of the audience. It is likely, although not known to a certainty, that Hopkinson or someone else distributed handbills of "Hail, Columbia's" lyrics when it was premiered.

Hopkinson was typical of elite cultural leaders of the 1780s and 1790s who hoped to elevate or refine the sensibilities of the political public and rise above partisanship. As he later wrote of his song, "the object" was to rouse "an American spirit...independent of, and above the interests, passion and policy of both belligerents....Of course the song found favor with both parties, for both were American, at least neither could disown the *sentiments and feelings* it indicated."⁴⁰ At first his hopes seemed to be realized. Abigail

³⁷ *Porcupine's Gazette* (Philadelphia), April 19, 1798.

³⁸ Sonneck, *Report on "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Hail Columbia," "America," "Yankee Doodle"* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909; reprint, Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 43.

³⁹ Oscar G. Sonneck, "The First Edition of 'Hail Columbia'!", *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 40 (Philadelphia 1916): 426-457; Sonneck, *Report on "The Star-Spangled Banner"*, 43-44. The song was at first called simply a "New Federal Song" but quickly became known as "Hail, Columbia."

⁴⁰ Francis Hopkinson, letter to Wyoming Band, August 24, 1840, quoted in O.G. Sonneck, "Critical Notes on the origin of 'Hail Columbia'" *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, 3, no. 1 (Nov, 1901), 140-141 [my emphasis].

Adams, then First Lady, immediately wrote to her sister about the enthusiastic reception greeting Hopkinson's song, contrasting it to the raucous partisan scenes at the theater in the evenings just preceding its premier (with "one party crying out the Presidents March and Yankee Doodle, whilst Ciera ["Ça ira"] was vociferated from the other").⁴¹

In the hothouse atmosphere of Philadelphia in 1798, however, Hopkinsons' high-flown new lyrics, like "Firm united let us be / rallying round our Liberty," could be appropriated by anyone for partisan purposes. Contrary to Hopkinson's later memory, some Jeffersonians did in fact disown his song in the immediate flush of its reception: the memory of the recent treatment of their beloved "Ça Ira" evidently still rankled. Benjamin Franklin Bache's partisan *Aurora* published a scathing attack the day after "Hail, Columbia's" first performance. The editorial condemned the "most ridiculous bombast" of the song, and its "vilest adulation to the Anglo-Monarchical Party," and it bitterly denounced the orchestra for refusing to play "Ça Ira."⁴²

Federalists also produced at least one directly partisan song, "Adams and Liberty." Like "Hail, Columbia," it was written in 1798 by a scion of a prominent family, Boston's Robert Treat Paine, Jr., and premiered at a meeting of the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society, soon after news of the furor over "Hail, Columbia" had reached the city. Commenters tied it regional pride: "if *Philadelphia, New-York, Baltimore*, and other cities, can boast of their federal and patriotic songs – a few days will evince, that though *last, Boston* will not have the *least* to feel proud of on the subject."⁴³ The song

⁴¹ *Porcupine's Gazette* (Philadelphia), April 27, 1798; Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, April 26, 1798, both quoted in Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years* (New York: MacMillan), 142.

⁴² *Aurora and Daily Advertiser* (Philadelphia), April 27, 1798; see also Sonneck, "Critical Notes on the Origin of 'Hail Columbia'", 141-142.

⁴³ *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), May 26, 1798. Italics in original.

featured highly partisan rhetoric about the Jeffersonian “traitors...who their country have sold” along with violent anti-French imagery: “While France her huge limbs bathe recumbent in blood.”⁴⁴ Genteel men like Paine did not hesitate to use patriotic song as a partisan club in the hostile political atmosphere of 1798.⁴⁵ These songs directed partisan emotion outward toward external enemies and inward toward political opponents.

Amidst the political battles and foreign embroilments of the first decade of the nineteenth century, genteel Americans continued try to instill patriotic unity through music. This project had uneven results. The First Barbary War of 1801-1805 generated a spate of uncontroversial patriotic songs. At an 1806 celebration for Stephen Decatur, hero of Tripoli, celebrants listened to a patriotic song composed for the occasion and illustrated with transparencies depicting his exploits in the war.⁴⁶ The June 1807 *Chesapeake-Leopard* Affair, during which the British HMS *Leopard* fired on the American frigate during an attempt to recapture Royal Navy deserters, sparked a unified, non-partisan, anti-British outburst of patriotic fervor. Songs printed in newspapers decried the “oppression and slander” of “insolent Britain” while promising vengeful retribution under the “Flag of Freedom.” July Fourth celebrations alternately mourned the event and vowed revenge: one New York toast promised that “The Leopard, spotted with the blood of freemen – may she be purified by a salt water birth at the bottom of the Chesapeake,” while an Irish society warned of “the hour approaching – when the hearts of fifty thousand bold Irish boys, will beat in unison with Yankee Doodle.” At the funeral

⁴⁴ Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents*, 148-149.

⁴⁵ Paine proved as much again during the contentious election two years later when, disillusioned with the Federalists, he penned a different song called “Jefferson and Liberty.” Benjamin S. Schoening, Eric T. Kasper, *Don’t Stop Thinking About the Music: The Politics of Songs and Musicians in Presidential Campaigns* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 37.

⁴⁶ Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents*, 180-183.

of a sailor killed in the attack at Norfolk, Virginia, cannon fire and a band with “drums muffled” accompanied the casket to its rest.⁴⁷

Still, writers continued to use patriotic music to inflame partisan rivalry. When Thomas Jefferson declined to go to war after the *Leopard* Affair and instead signed the 1807 Embargo Act, an unnamed author in Delaware distributed a broadside verse, for public distribution and impromptu performance, set to the Masonic song “Come, Let Us Prepare” excoriating the administration’s empty patriotism: “What a fuss we have made / about rights and free trade.” Both “Yankee Doodle” and “Hail, Columbia” were considered fair game to be set to newly political verses, lending their familiar patriotic strains a partisan bent. For example, “Hail, Columbia” was used with a new verse to mock Alexander Hamilton after the contentious 1801 election, while “Yankee Doodle” became an attack on Federalist smugglers during the Embargo crisis.⁴⁸ During the unsettled first decade of the new century, patriotic music was used to attack internal and external enemies and also to reflect unified national sentiment about current events.

By the spring of 1798 the nationalist music of the French Revolution was liable to be vilified as resoundingly as it had been cheered five years earlier. No longer simply representing the triumph of the true republican spirit, it had instead become the music of the enemy, whose patterning of the Americans’ shining example had run to unchecked democracy and finally tyranny. Yet the oppositional character of patriotic music and its performance remained in place. Historian Laura Mason has argued that “La Marseillaise”

⁴⁷ *American Mercury* (Hartford, CT), August 6, 1807; *Republican Star* (Easton, MD), August 11, 1807; *New York Public Advocate*, July 11, 1807; *New York Commercial Advertiser*, July 13, 1807; *New York Spectator*, July 4, 1807; *Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1807.

⁴⁸ Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents*, 170-185. An extant broadside of the Dover, Delaware embargo song has “or Jemmy” (referring to Secretary of State James Madison) and “Madison” scrawled in longhand next to the attacks on Jefferson.

represented a blend of “evocative power and vagueness” that “permit[ted] individual singers (or auditors) to personalize their enemy” as they chose.⁴⁹ Americans who rejected the French anthem simply replaced it with songs of their own. A universally popular body of patriotic music that referenced the national past while reflecting a supposedly consensual patriotism was still to come.

Genteel, Martial, and Religious Precursors of the Patriotic Sublime

Joseph Hopkinson wanted to express harmonious patriotic sentiment when he wrote “Hail, Columbia,” in response to what he saw as dangerous factionalism at the end of the 1790s. As we have seen, audience response undermined him. Joseph Treat Paine, Jr. was apparently motivated by partisanship in authoring his nationalist songs. Still, the republican virtues that genteel men of letters espoused in their associational life prefigured important aspects of patriotic practices yet to come that became more broadly rooted in American society. The origins of Francis Scott Key’s “Star Spangled Banner” illustrate the genteel roots of the patriotic sublime, and its dissemination speeded up their democratization. Music with origins in religious devotion and the military also contributed to the emergence of less partisan patriotic music. An analysis of songs as diverse as the military fife and drum tune “Yankee Doodle” and the church anthem “Chester” demonstrates that the patriotic sublime had more than one ancestor, and also begins to uncover the lasting importance of the martial valence of patriotic music.

“Yankee Doodle” gained prominence during the American Revolution, and its evocative power never really waned in antebellum America. It was distinct from other

⁴⁹ Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 99. See also Michael E. McClellan, “Counterrevolution in Context: Music and Political Dissent in Revolutionary France,” *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 31-57.

national songs like “Hail, Columbia!” or “The Star Spangled Banner,” because it lacked the draw of triumphalist military lyrics. Its emotional impact stemmed solely from its tune.⁵⁰ It was also distinguished by its early origins: “Yankee Doodle” was the only original song from the Revolution that remained in the patriotic canon, and it continued to be used by the military through at least the Civil War. It and many other bugle calls, and fife and drum tunes, were integral parts of military life – the so-called “field music” that accompanied military drills and maneuvering and was familiar to soldiers and civilians alike.⁵¹

Like “Washington’s March,” “Yankee Doodle” contains a characteristic march-style syncopated rhythm. It is an extremely simple medium-tempo march in two eight-bar phrases that break naturally into two-bar segments. In the first phrase, every note falls exactly on the beat; the same is true of the second phrase with the exception of the dotted pair that opens every two bars. In field music, a characteristic single-drag tap on the drum accompanied the tune played on the fife. Easy to perform and follow, this was a piece made for marching, whether in combat or on parade, and simple enough for amateur musicians to master quickly.

Field music was standard accompaniment for army and militia companies, and procuring it was important to officers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Cincinnati, Ohio was a small town on the Ohio River protected by Fort Washington, militia returns list numbers of musicians in the First Brigade of the First Division, Ohio

⁵⁰ Sonneck, *Report on “The Star Spangled Banner,”* *passim*. See also William Gibbons, “‘Yankee Doodle’ and Nationalism, 1780-1920,” *American Music* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2008), 246-247, 271n1.

⁵¹ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 83-84; H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 27. See also for example *Maneuvers of a Battalion to which are added Regulations of the Different Beats of the Drum and of the Grand Parade* (Charleston, 1814), 123-124.

Militia. These detailed return forms have spaces in each company for a drummer and fifer. Regiments carried drum majors and fife majors as non-commissioned officers. Whether or not each company filled its musician slots varied depending on the company and the year: the local militia depended on the musical talent available in the frontier community to fill its ranks. For example, in 1805 the 1st Regiment carried a fife major but no drum major, along with three drummers and two fifers, while the 4th Regiment had both drum and fife major in charge of two drummers and two fifers. Five years earlier, the 2nd Regiment carried drummers for each of its companies, and all but one had a fifer.⁵² It is evident that the military both valued its field music and struggled to find enough musicians to cover its needs in the sparsely-populated west.

Officers paid as much attention to procuring music in urban centers as they did on the western frontier of the nation, even when under immediate wartime threat. The garrison at Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the War of 1812, estimated to be about 1,000 men composed of genteel volunteers like Isaac Munro along with a mass of middling and poorer soldiers, was accustomed to the practice and rituals of music. Baltimore's city government paid drummers and fifers throughout 1813 and 1814 to accompany troop movements and the construction of fortifications around the city. For example, on April 30 and May 8, 1813, the 51st Regiment invoiced the city government for music performed at Fort McHenry and during a tour of duty at North Point. In the invoice of April 30, the paymaster of the 51st Regiment wrote in a pleading tone, "please to pay John Sanders one of our musik for four Days musik to fort Mchenry...the[y] want their money." A note was signed by John Sanders for receipt of payment "for three days

⁵² Torrence Family Papers, Mss qT 691fRM, Box 51, Cincinnati History Library and Archives. Returns also sometimes listed drums and fifes in detailed equipment categories. For example, the 2nd Regiment appears to have owned two drums and a fife in 1800; other musicians must have owned their instruments.

attendance...as Drummer and Fifer.”⁵³ Evidently, martial music was highly valued by the 51st Regiment of militia, and by the city of Baltimore.

The widespread popularity of “Yankee Doodle” indicated the martial aspect of national sentiment, but patriotic music also demonstrated a sacred valence. William Billings’ patriotic anthem “Chester” was, after “Yankee Doodle,” the most well-known piece of patriotic music during the Revolutionary period, although it did not demonstrate the same staying power. The iconoclastic Billings, who made his living as a tanner and singing school master, was probably the most prolific composer in late eighteenth century America. Along with a group of sacred tunebook compilers and composers known collectively as the First New England School, Billings developed a style largely divorced from European precedents and self-consciously American.

Based on the so-called “fuging tune,”⁵⁴ Billings desired a “strong, powerful, majestic impression,”⁵⁵ and seems to have achieved it. In one of his hymnbooks the Rev. Mather Byles wrote approvingly of the “sublimest Sphere” of Billings’ music: “Then rolls the Rapture thro’ the Air around / In the full Magic Melody of Sound.”⁵⁶ Harriet Beecher Stowe later recalled the powerful impressions of the fuging tunes of her

⁵³ Record Group 22, War of 1812 Records, msa-sc5458-45-20-0025, Baltimore City Archives, accessed on <http://mdhistory.net>, 10/27/2009). The payments were to four different individually identified drummers and fifers, suggesting that these were in fact not members of the 51st Regiment but instead hired musicians. A fifer in Cincinnati who was paroled after the siege of Detroit in 1812, Enoch Jackman or Jackson, earned \$8 month, equivalent to an ordinary private’s pay at the time. See Torrence Family Papers, Box 52, Cincinnati History Library, and Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Short History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 21.

⁵⁴ This is not in the sense of a carefully constructed contrapuntal fugue but is instead a looser and simpler form. In Billings’ own description, “the parts come after each other, with the same notes.” The simplest contrapuntal form is the round, as in the familiar “Three Blind Mice” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” For Billings’ quote, see Chase, *America’s Music*, 141. See also Richard Crawford. “Fuging-tune.” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2256601>.

⁵⁵ Chase, *America’s Music*, 142. See also David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth Century Composer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

⁵⁶ Both quoted in Chase, *America’s Music*, 142.

childhood when she wrote that “there was a grand, wild freedom, an energy of motion...that well expressed the heart of the people courageous in combat.”⁵⁷ In her memory, Billings’ music was associated with the heroism of the Revolutionary generation.

Billings’ *The New England Psalm-Singer* (1770) and *The Singing Master’s Assistant* (1778) included patriotic anthems for performance by church congregations. “Chester” was printed in both hymnbooks and frequently reprinted in tunebooks that compiled songs from different sources. The appeal of “Chester” lies in its tunefulness and rhythmic snap (Figure 1.2). Written in four-part harmony, each voice contains significant melodic movement, and each of its phrases opens with a quick-moving dactyl (a long stressed syllable followed by two short unstressed) that propels the rhythm briskly. As one scholar has said, “it is hard to imagine anyone singing this tune softly or slowly.”⁵⁸

“Chester” contains a confluence of patriotism and religious feeling that Francis Scott Key would later echo. Billings’ first stanza relates the divine election of the patriot cause. God “inspir’d us for the fight” in the second stanza, and in the final stanza Billings attributes triumph to divine sanction: “What grateful Off’ring shall we bring? / What shall we render to the Lord?” The cause of God’s elect and the cause of the revolution were one and the same. Nathaniel Gould, Boston native, bandleader and hymn compiler,

⁵⁷ James A. Keene, *A History of Music Education in the United States* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982), 33.

⁵⁸ Richard Crawford and David McKay, *William Billings of Boston*, 30; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 42-43; Grosvenor Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 6-8.

Chester

William Billings

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Chester" by William Billings. The score is arranged for four vocal parts: Treble, Counter, Tenor, and Bass. The music is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are as follows:

Let ty-rantssshake their i - ron rod, And Slav'-ry clank her
 gal - ling chains, We fear them not, we trust in
 God, New eng-land's God for ev - er reigns.

The score includes measure numbers 7 and 12, indicating the progression of the hymn. The lyrics are written below the corresponding vocal staves, with some words hyphenated across measures.

Figure 1.2. William Billings, “*Chester*” (Opus33 at English Wikimedia, Wikimedia Commons). In Billing’s original hymnbooks it was similarly arranged for vocal performance in church.

noted decades later the “mixed character” of “Chester,” which “combin[ed] religion and patriotism” and was “a powerful instrument, for the time, in exciting the spirit of liberty.”⁵⁹ In historian Linda Colley’s phrase, “Chester” “summoned up a people exposed to struggle but redeemed through faith.”⁶⁰ People who sang “Chester” experienced it as both sacral faith and patriotism: invariably printed alongside hymns and thus often sung in churches, “Chester” was a stirring patriotic song in a religious setting.

Billings also wrote revolutionary-era ideology into “Chester.” The “iron rod” of the tyrant and the “galling chains” of slavery suffuse the first two phrases with an ideologically tinged fearfulness and fervor that is resolved in the soaring melody, which seems to point toward God’s triumph in the stanza’s closing words. Billings was deeply immersed in the milieu of Boston’s radicals: for example, he was a member of the New South Church and acquainted with Samuel Adams. Adams was himself a music-lover, particularly attracted to psalmody, and made political use of it: a Tory rival remembered that Adams “had a good Voice, & was a Master in vocal Musick. This Genius he improved, by instituting singing Societys of Mechanicks, where he presided; & embraced such Opportunities to ye inculcating Sedition, ‘till it had ripened into Rebellion.”⁶¹ With “Chester,” Billings brought sacral patriotism into the church, where ordinary Americans were accustomed to singing. Some of them, like Adams, took vocal music honed in church to other civic spaces.

“Chester” maintained its popularity into the 1780s, appearing in at least a dozen tunebooks in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Beginning in the 1790s Billings’ music,

⁵⁹ Nathaniel Duren Gould, *Church Music in America* (Boston: A.N. Johnson, 1853), 43.

⁶⁰ Colley, *Britons*, 43-55, quote on 43; Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France*, 46-48.

⁶¹ Crawford and McKay, *William Billings of Boston*, 66-67.

and the fusing style in general, was eclipsed by so-called “ancient music.” This reform of sacred music privileged older Protestant psalmody over new sacred music written by Americans. Critics like Andrew Law, who wrote fusing tunes himself before switching to the cause of “ancient music,” attacked the First New England School for its lack of “correct musical taste.”⁶² Even so, “Chester” continued to appear in collections in Baltimore, New York, South Carolina, Delaware, and Pennsylvania in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.⁶³ The sacral valence of “Chester” would be incorporated in many later patriotic songs, but it was the martial valence of field music that would have the greater influence on the patriotic sublime.

Genteel songwriters like Joseph Hopkinson, Robert Treat Paine, Jr., and Francis Scott Key were also early progenitors of the patriotic sublime. In the decade and a half before the War of 1812, they drew on the culture of refinement and sensibility for material for patriotic songs, desiring to cultivate republican virtues among a broad audience. Ultimately it took the war, and Americans’ response to the trauma of invasion and news of military victories with triumphant patriotic songs, to transform this genteel project into the widespread martial patriot music of the postwar years.

Francis Scott Key’s “The Star Spangled Banner,” like many songs patriotic and otherwise in antebellum America, utilized an existing popular tune. English composer

⁶² Law’s criticisms were musically nonsensical. For example, he disparaged Billings’ use of what he called “perfect” chords – open fifths and octaves. Musicologists argue that there is no reason in theory that the harmonic thirds in European music would lead to the aural distinction that Law attempts to make. See Crawford and McKay, *William Billings of Boston*, 190-191; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 126-128.

⁶³ For the print history of “Chester,” see Richard Crawford, ed., *The Core Repertory of American Psalmody, Vols. 11-12* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), xxx. See also Chase, *America’s Music*, Chapter 7. “Chester” found a second life, without its patriotic lyrics, as a popular tune in the new religious style of Sacred Harp or “shape-note” singing. Shape note hymnbooks retained many of the old New England tunes, disseminating them in rural areas throughout the south and west. Ironically Andrew Law, in another mid-career shift, was one of the first to advocate for shape notes as an easier way to teach children how to sing. See John Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith: sacred harp and American folksong* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); *The Sacred Harp* (Philadelphia, 1860).

John Stafford Smith probably wrote the tune sometime before the Revolution. It was not, however, originally a patriotic song. Titled “To Anacreon in Heaven,” it was instead associated with the Anacreontic Society in London, a musical society whose membership was largely restricted to the genteel.⁶⁴ A description of a meeting of the Anacreontic Society in 1786, attended by “several noblemen and gentlemen of the first distinction,” relates that “the entertainments of the evening” included “a grand concert [and] elegant supper” and the singing of “To Anacreon in Heaven” and other songs at the end of the dinner.⁶⁵ The Anacreontic Society exemplified the combination of “appetite, raillery...and pleasure seeking” associated with elite sociability, the deployment of polite wit, and the production of poetry and song that was a hallmark of *belles lettres* culture.⁶⁶

Clubs such as the Anacreontic Society were an integral component of genteel associational life in both England and America. In the British North American colonies and later in the fledgling United States, clubs and other institutions associated with *belles lettres* provided leisure and pleasure, but also served an important function in the development of civil society, including the American descendants of London’s Anacreontic Society in New York and later in Baltimore. The Columbian Anacreontic Society of New York, founded in 1795 by singer and stage manager John Hodgkinson, illustrates the close involvement of such institutions in the production of republican nationalist sentiment in the new nation. In 1799, for example, the society was a prominent part of the funeral procession following George Washington’s death, marching

⁶⁴ Sonneck, *The Star Spangled Banner*, 36. See *ibid.*, 9-63 for a detailed discussion of the history of the song’s authorship. For a typical description of “To Anacreon in Heaven” as a “drinking song,” see for example Walter Lord, *The Dawn’s Early Light*, 296. “To Anacreon in Heaven” were the first words of the song, which was as often titled “The Anacreontic Song.” I will title it “To Anacreon in Heaven” throughout, since this was the title almost always used in song sheet printings of Francis Scott Key’s lyric.

⁶⁵ W.T. Parks, quoted in Sonneck, *The Star Spangled Banner*, 28.

⁶⁶ Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters*, 188-189, 207-208, 312. For the full lyric of “To Anacreon in Heaven,” See Sonneck, *The Star Spangled Banner*, 32-33.

between the instrumental musicians and New York's clergy. The society also sponsored a concert at St. Paul's chapel following the procession. The music, beginning with a solo addressed to the "sons of Columbia," epitomizes the link between song and the genteel interest in promoting nationalist sentiment.⁶⁷ The partisanship that accompanied the appearances of "Hail, Columbia" and "Adams and Liberty" stood in stark contrast to the more contained patriotic mode of events such as Washington's funeral procession in New York the following year.

Public performances like the 1799 memorial for Washington illustrate the articulation of republican values among genteel members of clubs and societies, the artists who performed at such events, and a broader public audience. As historian Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan puts it, members of such associations believed themselves to have "innate capacities [that] suited them to guiding the populace through salutary transformation," and that through these capacities they could "remake the world" by

⁶⁷ The Columbian Anacreontic Society's mixed-sex membership overlapped with the intellectuals of the Friendly Club, a conversational circle founded by Elihu Hubbard Smith, Charles Brockden Brown, William Dunlap, and several other genteel intellectuals. It was dedicated to improving American society through literary productions that promoted nationalist sentiment. See Bryan Waterman, *Republic of Intellect*, 30, 261n; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2-3, 121-123, 128-129. On the history of the Columbian Anacreontic Society, see Oscar G.T. Sonneck, *Early Concert Life in America* (Leipzig, 1907), 204-207; Sir George Grove, Waldo Selden Pratt, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, American Supplement*, vol. 6 (New York: McMillan, 1920), 175, 242; *Sacred Music, to be performed in St. Paul's Church, on Tuesday the 31st December, 1799, by the Anacreontic and Philharmonic Societies, at the funeral ceremonies in honor of the memory of the late General Washington*, Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 35951, American Antiquarian Society; *Laws and Regulations of the Columbian Anacreontic Society, as revised, amended, and agreed to, the 6th day of March, 1800*, Early American Imprints, series 1, no. 38097, American Antiquarian Society. For a useful discussion of private civil society as part of the Habermasian public sphere, see Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime" *History and Theory* 31 (1992), esp. 5. See also Craig Calhoun, "Introduction" in Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); John L. Brooke, "Consent, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere," in Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 207-49; and essays by John L. Brooke, David Waldstreicher, and Ruth H. Bloch, in *William & Mary Quarterly Forum*, "Alternative Histories of the Public Sphere," vol. 62 no. 1 (January 2005).

cultivating sensibility and with it republican virtues in the general public.⁶⁸ For example, a concert open to the public advertised by the Columbian Anacreontic Society in 1795 featured an “Ode on the Passions,” recited by John Hodgkinson and accompanied by “Music representative of each passion.”⁶⁹ In seeking to educate their public audience about the modalities of emotion, including the experience of the sublime, Hodgkinson and the Anacreontic Society were engaged in the democratization of sensibility.

The burgeoning print culture of the United States provided genteel men of letters with their most effective mechanism for attempting to spread nationalist sentiment to a broad audience. Elites had a complex relationship toward the popular print media of the Early Republic, including the newspapers, almanacs, broadsides, and books that an increasingly broad readership used to make sense of their community and the world. Although there was always a tension between the desire to appeal to an exclusive group of one’s genteel peers and the wish to have one’s writing circulated widely, in the Early Republic genteel men of letters increasingly wanted the products of what was originally their private associational life to influence the wider society.⁷⁰

Performing and publishing songs demonstrating republican sensibilities was one way to cultivate nationalism. The tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven” was used for just such a purpose. In its original form, the song quickly crossed the Atlantic and, after its first American publication in 1778, made its way into a variety of media, including sheet

⁶⁸ Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic*, 22, 56.

⁶⁹ *New York Daily Advertiser*, June 6, 1795.

⁷⁰ Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic*, 69-70; Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 110-111; Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power*, 198-199; Ziff, *Writing the New Nation*, 101-102. Michael Warner identifies “Americanness” or the “national imaginary” as a nineteenth century phenomenon, distinct from the nationalism influenced by republican ideology of the 1790s. See Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 120-121.

music and songsters.⁷¹ The tune recirculated in a variety of contexts. For example, a 1799 songster published in Philadelphia set the lyrics of two different patriotic songs to it, while the 1804 *Baltimore Musical Miscellany* contained both the lyric of “To Anacreon in Heaven” and another song “for a literary society” set to the former’s tune. Most famously, the Federalist party song “Adams and Liberty” was set to the tune of “Anacreon in Heaven” in 1798.⁷²

People like Joseph Hopkinson and the members of the Columbian Anacreontic Society had already embarked on the project of educating the republican citizen in the 1790s. The climate of partisan rancor that characterized the reaction to “Hail, Columbia” should not obscure the fact that both Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans believed they were working towards national unity. As David Waldstreicher writes of the partisan public celebrations of the 1790s, “we lose something of the character of these events if we emphasize only their importance in the creation of partisan subcultures....[such] civic festivals were attempts to take over public space and create unanimity” around patriotic sentiment.⁷³ Still, Americans found that the urgency of partisanship could in fact overtake the attempt to create unanimity. The forging of nationalist sentiment capable of bypassing partisan politics would require the continued development of American musical culture. The agonizing reality of British invasion would accelerate the process, and a moderate Federalist and attorney from an elite Maryland planter family would be its champion.

⁷¹ P.W. Filby and Edward G. Howard, *Star-Spangled Books: Books, Sheet Music, Newspapers, Manuscripts, and Persons Associated with The Star-Spangled Banner* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1972), 79, 127.

⁷² *A Collection of Songs, selected from the works of Mr. Dibdin...* (Philadelphia, 1799); Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 85.

⁷³ Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 129, 257.

Francis Scott Key and “The Star Spangled Banner”

Born on August 1, 1779 in Frederick County, Maryland, Francis Scott Key grew up at the family home called Terra Rubra, a tract of more than 1,800 acres, at Pipe Creek in the Monocacy Valley. The Keys were important Maryland Federalists and slave-owning members of the planter class. Key’s father was an Associate Justice of the Fifth Judicial District in Maryland, while his grandfather served as Maryland’s Attorney General. It is not surprising, then, that Key would become an attorney after graduating from St. John’s College in Annapolis. He began his practice in Frederick, Maryland and in 1805, Key, his wife, and two children settled in Georgetown near Washington, DC, where Key joined the practice of his uncle, Philip Barton Key, a Tory who had fought for the British during the revolution.⁷⁴ In 1812, as war talk grew increasingly strident, Francis Scott Key was solidly ensconced as a prominent attorney of Federalist inclination and a member of Georgetown’s elite.⁷⁵

Key had genteel literary aspirations and wrote poetry throughout his life, beginning with romantic odes to an unknown “Delia” during his college years. He also formed lifelong literary friendships, beginning with a few of his college friends and including Roger Brooke Taney, the future Chief Justice, who would become Key’s law partner in Frederick. In 1856, Taney would write the most well-known account of how Key composed “The Star Spangled Banner,” which he published as the introduction to a

⁷⁴ Philip Barton Key captained the Maryland Loyalist Regiment during the revolution. He was imprisoned in Florida at one point during the war and had his Maryland property confiscated, but was apparently later rehabilitated, in 1790 marrying the daughter of George Plater, Maryland’s governor in 1791-1792. See Edward S. Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key: Life and Times* (Brooklyn, NY: Biography Press, 1937), 23.

⁷⁵ David Hackett Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 167-168; Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, 1-6, 43-47. Key litigated high-profile cases such the legal maneuvering over the Burr conspiracy in 1807, successfully arguing before the Supreme Court for the release of Burr’s messengers to General James Wilkinson in Louisiana. See Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, 51-61.

collection of Key's poetry.⁷⁶ Key was not averse to the sociability of genteel club life either, joining Baltimore's Delphian Club in 1816. Like others of a literary bent, he seemed to recognize the importance of print culture to the young nation's identity. His first publication was in fact a patriotic song, an ode to Stephen Decatur, hero of Algiers, published anonymously in a Boston newspaper in 1805. Called "When the Warrior Returns," the Boston editor praised it as an "elegant and appropriate song."⁷⁷ Significantly, it was set to the tune of "To Anacreon in Heaven." Key originally wrote it for performance at a genteel event in Annapolis celebrating Decatur's return. That its first appearance in print should be in a Boston paper suggests how the ligaments of early national print culture functioned for a young, refined man like Key. Key himself may have wanted his song published or his compatriots at the Annapolis dinner urged him to share it with the public, although it is likely in that case that it would have appeared in a Baltimore or Frederick paper first. It is more probable that the ode, likely in print form as a small handbill or program insert, was simply carried to Boston by an attendee at the Annapolis celebration, where it was shared and eventually published.⁷⁸ Whatever the specific method of transmission, "When the Warrior Returns" showed Key's poetic aspirations as a man of letters and his desire to communicate his patriotism through print media.

⁷⁶ Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, 15, 24-25, 28. On male friendship, see for example Waterman, *Republic of Intellect*, 58-62, 264n37; Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic*, 141. Kaplan writes that Joseph Dennie of the Philadelphia *Port Folio* "asserted the splendor of male friendship and claimed that from such friendships and the larger communities built upon them...emerged beauty and a just society."

⁷⁷ Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 115.

⁷⁸ For romantic verse, see Francis Scott Key, *Poems* (New York, 1857), 83-85; and Key, untitled poem, n.d. John Howard Papers, 1662-1919, MS 469, Box 8, Maryland Historical Society. Also see Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 141-145; Cf. Furtwangler, *Acts of Discovery*, 34-36. For the Delphian Club, see Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, 230-231.

Key's most important epistolary friendship was with Congressman John Randolph, who lived near the Key family in Georgetown before his electoral defeat and political exile in Roanoke. Their correspondence in the years before and during the War of 1812 reveals Key's attitudes about partisanship and the war. Like most genteel Federalists, he disliked partisan print journalism, writing that "Party-men...are commanded by the present sovereigns of the country, the newspapers."⁷⁹ He especially disapproved of the political partisanship in Baltimore, which in 1812 had been the scene of a notorious riot after a Republican mob destroyed the offices of the Federalist Baltimore *Federal Republican*.

The 1812 Baltimore riot represents the persistence of the partisanship of the 1790s. One participant reportedly urged the mayor that the "laws of nature and reason" had to triumph over the "temple of Infamy" that the *Federal Republican* represented.⁸⁰ Despite my contention that patriotic sentiment began to shift into a new mode during the war, I do not want to argue that partisan contention disappeared – either during the war or in the decades afterwards. Instead, partisanship could go hand in hand with increasingly prominent displays of patriotic unity. Unifiers like Key had the elaboration of musical culture throughout the first half of the century partly to thank for this development.

⁷⁹ Key to John Randolph, August 16, 1814, Howard Papers, Box 8, MdHS. See also Richard Hofstadter, *Idea of a Party System*, 8-9, 12-13; Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 305-307.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Paul A. Gilje, "The Baltimore Riots of 1812 and the Breakdown of the Anglo-American Mob Tradition," *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1980), 549. Gilje argues that the Baltimore riot represented a shift from the semi-legitimate mobs of the eighteenth century, which to an extent elided class or rank difference, to a more violent and disruptive phenomenon. See also Frank A. Cassell, "The Great Baltimore Riot of 1812," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70 (1975); and Aaron McLean Winter, "The Laughing Doves of 1812 and the Satiric Endowment of Antiwar Rhetoric in the United States," *PMLA* 124, no. 5 (Oct., 2009), 1562-1581.

Key considered starting his own newspaper, which he promoted as an “impartial honest anti-party paper.”⁸¹ He was sympathetic to the Federalist view that partisan Republicans had orchestrated the war fever, but like most southern Federalists, national unity was paramount. Excoriating New England Federalists for their bald opposition to the war effort, he wrote to Randolph that “These yankees are sad fellows...I believe they will revolt from the union & consult their selfishness & the personal ambition of their leaders at the expense of every feeling of patriotism.”⁸² The Union above all: Key was willing to break with the “sad” northern Federalist faction of his own party.

For Key, patriotism was also a sacred duty, an emotional element of nationalist sentiment pointing back to the religious patriotism of William Billings. Key’s thoughts on the war were suffused with the sense—a sense he shared with many Jeffersonian Republicans—that the conflict was God’s trial, a fire that, while painful, might in the end refine the new nation. In 1813, he wrote that

If I did not believe we ought to suffer, & was not moreover sure that if we are to suffer it will do us good, I should be filled with the most gloomy anticipations...we must become better, & suffering will make us so. – Let us make up our minds to bear our share of it with patience.⁸³

Key was an active member of the Anglican church, but was also noticeably influenced by the waves of religious revivalism that occurred throughout the Early Republic and the first half of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ His letters are full of fervently pietistic language.

⁸¹ Francis Scott Key to John Randolph, Howard Papers, Box 8, MdHS, October 5, 1814; *The Examiner, Containing Political Essays on the Most Important Events of the Time* (New York), February 11, 1815, 310. For the 1812 Baltimore riots, see Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 56-71.

⁸² Francis Scott Key to John Randolph, November 13, 1814, Howard Papers, Box 8, MdHS. New England Federalists convened the Hartford Convention a month later. See Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 692-694.

⁸³ Francis Scott Key to John Randolph, May 14, 1813, Howard Papers, MdHS. For the larger trend among Republicans see Steven Watts, *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), chap. 2, esp. 100-104.

⁸⁴ Key was a longtime deacon of his local parish, and later in life a delegate to national Anglican conferences. See Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, chap. 13.

He wrote to his daughter about her being “born again,” saying, “There is not mistaking the feelings you describe—nothing but the spirit of God could put them in your heart.” He also acknowledged the populist dimension of religious revivalism, writing to John Randolph that “I can never doubt...that all who enquire with that sincerity & earnestness, which so awful a subject requires, will find the truth.”⁸⁵

Key’s pietistic Christianity informed his sacral patriotism. In a speech celebrating George Washington’s birthday and given in early 1814 to the Washington Society of Alexandria, VA, Key said of the national “deliverer” that his qualities were “blessings which a kind Providence has bestowed upon us.” He urged the audience to “sanctify” the commemoration of Washington’s birthday with patriotic “feelings.”⁸⁶ He also identified patriotism as an innate, divinely implanted sentiment in a speech at his alma mater, St. John’s College in 1827: “It may be that love of country springs from some undefinable and hidden instinct of our nature, wisely given to the heart of man to fit him for the filial duties which he owes to the land of his birth.”⁸⁷ Key’s most important statement of a sacred patriotism was his July Fourth oration in 1831, given in the rotunda of the United States Capitol. Key identified what he called a “sacred trust” as the “persevering virtue of republics.” Past wars were “trials,” and a God-given patriotism “pervading all classes

⁸⁵ Francis Scott Key to Mrs. Daniel Turner, February 24, 1835, Key-Cutts-Turner Family Papers, 1808-1975, MMC-3649, Library of Congress; Francis Scott Key to John Randolph, January 20, 1814, John Eager Howard Papers, Box 8, MdHS; See also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 31-34, 45; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 236-239.

⁸⁶ The Washington Society was an association of prominent Virginians formed in 1800 in honor of the memory of George Washington (Chief Justice John Marshall was among the members). *An oration, delivered by Francis S. Key, at a meeting of the Washington Society of Alexandria, on Tuesday, the 22nd of March, 1814*, Early American Imprints, Second Series, no. 31863. See also Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*, 101.

⁸⁷ Francis Scott Key, *A Discourse on Education, delivered at St. Anne’s Church, Annapolis, after the commencement of St. John’s College, February 22, 1827* (Annapolis, 1827).

of the people” saw the nation through.⁸⁸ Key’s sacral patriotism was very much in evidence in 1812. He disdained what he saw as the trumped up partisan “war fever” of that year but he conceived of true patriotism as a sacred duty and a unifying force.

In 1814, Key received a request from friends to journey to Baltimore to negotiate the release of Dr. William Beanes, a prominent Maryland doctor and friend of Key’s who had been captured by the British while chasing a band of British deserters turned marauders after the battle of Bladensburg. “Old Dr. Beanes” was subsequently detained aboard the British fleet hovering in the Chesapeake. Key agreed to make an attempt to free his friend, and on September 5, 1814, he and John S. Skinner, a government agent appointed to negotiate the release of prisoners, headed out from Baltimore toward the British fleet under a flag of truce.⁸⁹

Key and Skinner obtained Beanes’ release, and on September 12 the British transferred all three back to the American flag vessel. However, the British detained their ship in the invasion fleet due to the coming assault on Baltimore. On the thirteenth, the British landed troops on the far side of the city at North Point and began a bombardment of Fort McHenry, which guarded Baltimore from attack from the Chesapeake Bay (Figure 1.3). It was this bombardment that was visible to Key and Skinner on board the American packet. They watched the assault through what Skinner called an “anxious day and night”⁹⁰ and observed the American flag still flying over the fort on the morning of

⁸⁸ *Oration delivered by Francis S. Key, Esq., in the rotundo of the capitol of the U. States, on the 4th of July, 1831* (Washington, D.C., 1831), 9, 12.

⁸⁹ Key related his plans to secure the release of “old Dr. Beanes” in a letter to his mother; see Key to Phoebe Key, Sep. 2, 1814, quoted in *Maryland Historical Magazine* 55 (December 1960). For the background of Beanes capture, see Roger B. Taney, introduction to Key, *Poems*, 26, hereafter cited as “Taney; Oscar Sonneck, *“The Star Spangled Banner”*: Revised and enlarged from the “Report” on the above and other airs, issued in 1909 (Washington, D.C., 1914), 66-67.

⁹⁰ John S. Skinner, letter to *Baltimore Patriot*, May 23 1849, quoted in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 32 (December 1937), 347.



Figure 1.3. “A View of the Bombardment of Fort McHenry, near Baltimore, by the British Fleet, taken from the observatory, under the command of Admirals Cochrane & Cockburn, on the morning of the 13th of Sepr. 1814 (John Bower, 1814). Hambleton Print Collection, Special Collections Department, Maryland Historical Society.

the 14th. At some point during this tense period Key hastily penned a few lines of poetry about the bombardment on the back of a letter he had in his pocket. The British assault on Baltimore ultimately failed, and Key, Skinner, and Beanes were allowed to leave on the American packet when the British fleet weighed anchor. They returned to the city on September 16.⁹¹ Key finished his poem, written “in the fervor of the moment,” the night he and Skinner returned to Baltimore. It was printed for the first time the next day as a broadsheet titled, “Defence of Fort M’Henry,” set to “*Tune – Anacreon in Heaven*” (Figure 1.4).⁹²

“The Star Spangled Banner” invited its readers, listeners, and performers to experience vicariously the passionate emotions encompassing the patriotic sublime. A close reading of the song highlights four characteristics: its vivid rendering of the bombardment of Fort McHenry, its tightly structured narrative, its use of the eyewitness vantage point to convey sensory and emotional experience, and the dramatic quality of the music itself. Together these aspects of “The Star Spangled Banner” distinguished it from other patriotic songs written during the period and encouraged its widespread dissemination to readers and performers.

The vivid imagery of “The Star Spangled Banner” begins with the flag. Flags had been an important symbol of patriotism since the Revolutionary War: for example, American seamen imprisoned in Britain during the Revolution used makeshift American flags to celebrate news of American victories, and the Continental Colors, a flag which contained some elements of the future flag of the United States, was a familiar sight throughout the war. By 1814, the familiar arrangement of stars and stripes was in general

⁹¹ Borneman, *1812*, 244-246; Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 203-204. For a detailed timeline of Key’s sojourn with the British fleet, see Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 43-51.

⁹² Taney, 26; Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 51-52.

DEFENCE OF FORT M'HENRY.

The annexed song was composed under the following circumstances—
A gentleman had left Baltimore, in a flag of truce for the purpose of getting released from the British fleet, a friend of his who had been captured at Marlborough.—He went as far as the mouth of the Patuxent, and was not permitted to return lest the intended attack on Baltimore should be disclosed. He was therefore brought up the Bay to the mouth of the Patapsco, where the flag vessel was kept under the guns of a frigate, and he was compelled to witness the bombardment of Fort M'Henry, which the Admiral had boasted that he would carry in a few hours, and that the city must fall. He watched the flag at the Fort through the whole day with an anxiety that can be better felt than described, until the night prevented him from seeing it. In the night he watched the Bomb Shells, and at early dawn his eye was again greeted by the proudly waving flag of his country.

THE ANACREON IN HEAVEN.

O! say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the Rockets' red glare, the Bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our Flag was still there;

O! say does that star-spangled Banner yet wave,
O'er the Land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected new shines in the stream,

'Tis the star spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country, shall leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,
O'er the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.

O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation,
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land,
Praise the Power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—"In God is our Trust;"

And the star-spangled Banner in triumph shall wave,
O'er the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.

Figure 1.4. "Defence of Fort McHenry" (Baltimore, broadside, 1814). Broadside, Special Collections Department, Maryland Historical Society. Note the framing introduction.

use – although not its description as the “star spangled banner,” a phrase that Key may have cribbed from an obscure song first published in the 1790s.⁹³

Key’s song immediately invites us to see the flag flying over the ramparts of the fort. To amplify its sensory presence, he gives it shape and luster – the *broad* stripes and *bright* stars – and he makes it move, fluttering in the fitful breeze. The two most vivid images in the first stanza, the “rockets’ red glare” and the “bombs bursting in air,” both center on the flag, implying that their explosions intermittently illuminated the banner during the night. The bursting of the bombs evokes the sublimity of sound. Edmund Burke cited warlike sounds such as cannon fire for their emotional impact: “excessive loudness [which] is sufficient to overpower the soul.”⁹⁴ Patriotic music was often accompanied by the sounds of gunfire in civic ceremonies. The sound of rockets was thus familiar in its setting; however, it was new in its particulars. That sound, and the sight of their “red glare,” would have been especially meaningful to readers in 1814 because it describes the explosion of the Congreve rocket, a new weapon of war developed by the British and used extensively during the Napoleonic Wars. The red trail of the rocket, and its unpredictable course, terrified British foes. Shortly before the Fort McHenry bombardment, for example, Congreve rockets had panicked American militia at the battle of Bladensburg.⁹⁵

⁹³ A song called “The Social Club,” first printed in a 1792 songster and set to “To Anacreon in Heaven,” contained the lines, “Father Jove then look’d down from his chrystalline throne, / Which with star-spangl’d luster celestially shone.” The song was re-printed in the 1805 *Baltimore Musical Miscellany*, printed in Baltimore in 1805. It is possible that Key may have seen this book; in any case, the locution appeared again in Key’s own poem of 1806 “When the Warrior Returns,” where the poet referred to the “star-spangled flag.” See Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 80, 85, 116.

⁹⁴ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, 128. Burke identifies the sound of “artillery” as productive of the sensation of the sublime. On the use of descriptive language in poetry to evoke the sublime, see *Philosophical Inquiry*, Part V, passim.

⁹⁵ Donald R. Hickey, *Don’t Give Up the Ship!*, 236-237.

The narrative arc of the lyrics focuses attention on the anxiety of the moment and the eventual triumph of the flag's survival. Key begins with the now famous question, "Oh! say can you see by the dawn's early light / What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming," and he uses it to create suspense and forward momentum. The first stanza ends in uncertainty: mirroring the first two lines, Key asks again if the "star-spangled banner yet wave[s]." The second stanza begins with more unresolved tension; the eyewitness glimpses something "dimly seen" over the ramparts, but the breeze "half conceals, half discloses" it. The tension is resolved as dawn breaks: the flag suddenly appears out of the "mists of the deep" and the "dread silence" of the British guns. The stream of sunlight reveals it in its "full glory" and releases the suspense built up by the first stanza's question.⁹⁶

The phrase beginning with the "rocket's red glare" coincides with the third phrase of the tune. The strong rhythmical pulse of "The Star Spangled Banner," like earlier grand marches such as "Hail, Columbia" and "La Marseillaise," lends itself to imposing performances, but not, in this case, to the physical act of marching. Unlike those earlier pieces it is in triple instead of duple time: a series of four eight-bar phrases in the form AABC. Many versions of the sheet music, especially early on, print eighth notes for the pick-up notes that characterize the A phrases every two measures (for example, on "oh" and "by" in the first phrase – see Figure 1.5). As we saw earlier with "La Marseillaise," it

⁹⁶ The narrative drive of "The Star Spangled Banner" is in sharp contrast to many other contemporary genteel patriotic songs. "Hail, Columbia," for example, celebrates the heroism of the revolutionary war generation largely by didactically reciting republican virtues or by personifying them in the classical figure of Columbia and a deified Washington. Even its versification is static: each stanza ends in an identical chorus, whereas, to propel the narrative forward, Key introduces slight variations in the last two lines of each stanza, which function as choruses.

The Star-Spangled Banner

The words of "The Star-Spangled Banner" were written by Mr. Key in 1814 under stirring circumstances. He was detained on board one of the British ships which attacked Fort McHenry. All night the bombardment continued, indicating that the fort had not surrendered. Toward the morning the firing ceased, and Mr. Key awaited dawn in great suspense. When light came, he saw that "our flag was still there," and in the fervor of the moment he wrote the lines of our national song. The tune is ascribed by the weight of authority to John Stafford Smith, an English composer who set it about 1780.

Francis Scott Key

John Stafford Smith

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's ear-ly light, What so proud-ly we hailed at the twi-light's last

gleam-ing? Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the per-il-ous fight, O'er the ram-parts watch'd were so gal-ant-ly

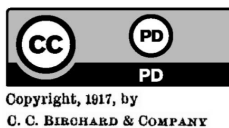
stream-ing? And the rock-ets' red glare, the bombs burst-ing in air, Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still

there. Oh, say, does that star span-gled ban-ner yet

wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

2. On the shore, dimly seen thro' the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner: oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

3. Oh, thus be it e'er when free-men shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that has made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just;
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!



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Source: Dykema, Peter, Will Earhart, Osbourne McConathy, and Hollis Dann. *I Hear America Singing*: 55 *Songs and Choruses for Community Singing* Boston.; C. C. Birchard & Company, 1917.

Figure 1.5. "The Star Spangled Banner." (Aetzkorn, Wikimedia Commons).

would be natural in performance to sing this strong rhythm in the characteristic dotted phrase of the grand march—another example of *notes inégales*—and indeed they were often printed this way in later arrangements. The triple meter is significant because march music is almost invariably in duple time; triple meter (three beats per measure, in this case) means that “The Star Spangled Banner,” despite its imagery, was not used as a march, but was flexible and available across many venues, including civic and commercial occasions using a seated wind band or small dance orchestra.⁹⁷

In addition, the singer experiences a shift from swelling grandeur to the lyrical on the words “and the rocket’s red glare.” This is partly due to the sudden break occasioned by the large interval of more than an octave on those words, separating the second A section from the B section. The melody of the B section also moves conjunctly, with its notes in a restricted tonal range, in contrast to the large intervallic leaps of the A and C sections: this lends the melody a flowing, lyrical quality in this section. (Modern sociological studies of emotional reactions to music have demonstrated that respondents quite closely attribute adjectives like “serene” or “graceful” to note patterns representing flowing, lyrical melodies, and words like “exciting,” “vigorous,” and “majestic” to melodies featuring fast tempos and firm rhythms.⁹⁸) Finally, the dynamic markings accompanying this section in both modern performance practice and contemporary print

⁹⁷ Modern usage of “The Star Spangled Banner” by uniformed marching bands – played at rest as the formal national anthem – demonstrates this. Performance practice for the national song stems from the solemnity that has grown up around it, but also probably to some extent from the difficulty of actually marching to a piece in triple time.

⁹⁸ A “firm” rhythm has notes that land on downbeats; marches are good examples. Patrick N. Juslin, John A. Sloboda, eds., *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 377-379; Alexander L. Ringer. “Melody.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 18, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18357>, especially subsection 10, “Musical Texture”; Steven J. Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind, and Body* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 91-92; Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

stipulate a lower volume, from *forte* to *mezzo forte*, for example, followed by a crescendo into the vigorous rhythm and larger intervals of the final section of the piece (Figure 1.6). The tune creates a sense of dramatic tension when combined with the terror of the rockets and bombs raining down. “The Star Spangled Banner’s” combination of quieter high notes, the vivid visual scene the mind’s eye is constructing, and the thunderous concluding section, reliably produced the sensation of awe and even wonder.

Lyrically, Key’s sacral patriotism is most evident in the third and fourth stanzas. Attuned as his patriotism was to the necessity of trial and suffering, it is not surprising that he invoked “the havoc of war” and the “war’s desolation” before reminding us of the divine “Power” that saved the “heav’n rescued” nation from defeat. From songs like “Hail, Columbia” and even British patriotic songs like “God Save the King,” subsequent audiences for “The Star Spangled Banner” were also familiar with the triumphal imagery and message imbedded in the third and fourth stanzas: for example, “then conquer we must, when our cause is just.” Although much less well-known today than the famous first stanza, the victorious flag at the end of Key’s lyric, waving in “triumph” over the bloodied and defeated enemy who fled in “terror,” also evoked the patriotic sublime.

“The Star Spangled Banner” was rushed into print. The first broadside version of “The Defence of Fort M’Henry” appeared the day after the British released Key, less than twenty-four hours after he returned to Baltimore. In it, Key’s song was preceded by a prose introduction, likely written by either John Skinner or Joseph Hopper Nicholson, a Maryland judge and another friend of Key’s who had commanded a volunteer artillery company composed of gentlemen from Baltimore in Fort McHenry during the

4 Con spirito.

TEMA.

f Ped. *

Cres. *mf* Ped. * Ped. *

Dim. *f* Ped. * Ped. *

Cres. Ped. * Ped. *

Un poco piu mosso.

VAR: 1. *f* Ped. * *p*

2714

Figure 1.6. *Variations on "The Star Spangled Banner,"* (Baltimore: Miller & Beacham, 1854). Lester S. Levy Collection, Box 16, Item 38. This is the third page of an arrangement for piano. Following an elaborate introduction, the arrangement states the melody on this page. Note the reduced dynamic markings in the third phrase and the crescendo toward the climactic fourth.

bombardment.⁹⁹ It was immediately distributed to the soldiers guarding Fort McHenry, as well as throughout the town. Private Severn Teackle wrote to his brother-in-law a few days later about the terror of the bombardment (“from such a rattling a[nd] whistling Good Lord forever deliver me”) and also mentioned the distribution of the first broadside on September 17: “We have a Song composed by Mr. Key of G. Town which was presented to every individual in the Fort in a separte [sic] Sheet – you may have seen it as it has been published.”¹⁰⁰ On the evening of September 20, Isaac Munro, the militiaman who experienced the bombardment firsthand, printed the first newspaper edition of “Defence of Fort M’Henry,” together with its introduction, in his newspaper, the *Baltimore Patriot*. He placed them at the top of the first column of the first page, instead of on the second or third page as was more usual for poems. Thus, Munro chose to give the song pride of place in what was the first issue of the *Baltimore Patriot* printed since it had ceased publishing just before the attack. Munro could not resist adding an encomium of his own trumpeting the song as “a beautiful and animating effusion, which is destined long to outlast the occasion.”¹⁰¹

Men like Munro also believed in the potentially salutary effects of music on troops and others. Not long before the British attack, an editorial in Munro’s competitor paper, the *Baltimore American*, emphasized “the power of music over the human passions” and its importance in eliciting patriotic emotions. The anonymous author writes, “Who that has ever heard the *Reveillee* [sic] played at Fort McHenry by the

⁹⁹ For authorship of the introduction, see Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 57-58.

¹⁰⁰ Severn Teackle to Philip Wallis, September 23, 1814, quoted in Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 157-158. A facsimile of the broadside is in *ibid*, 64. Only two copies of the original broadside remain, one at the Maryland Historical Society, the other at the Library of Congress.

¹⁰¹ Munro’s prefatory note reads in full: “The following beautiful and animating effusion, which is destined long to outlast the occasion, and outlive the impulse, which produced it, has already been extensively circulated. In our first renewal of publication, we rejoice in an opportunity to enliven the sketch of an exploit so illustrious, with strains which so fitly celebrate it.” *Baltimore Patriot*, September 20, 1814.

skillful performers of that garrison” will not “be ready to acknowledge the power of the ‘ear-piercing fife and spirit-stirring drum’”? “And who has not witnessed the effect produced on an audience at the theatre, when some favorite air was struck up?” The author urged the broad dissemination of patriotic songs, “which should be printed in single sheets, and distributed at small expense. A well-written song, to a good popular tune, will,” wrote the author, “do more to excite martial ardor, than the most elaborate essay.”¹⁰² The broadside and Munro’s newspaper edition of “Defence of Fort M’Henry” were answers to this call. Not to be outdone by its rival, the editor of the *Baltimore American* printed the song on September 22, one day after it first appeared in Munro’s paper.¹⁰³

The evidence also suggests that Munro, Nicholson, and others close to Key valued “The Star Spangled Banner” precisely because they saw it as evoking the sublime through the concrete imagery of battle. Munro emphasized his own direct sensory perception of the bombardment in his public letter. He saw the British rockets ascending (the “red glare” of Key’s lyric), observed the American’s own gunshot “strike the frigates,” and heard, and felt, the explosions of mortar shells. And Munro explicitly called “the cannonading...sublime and enlivening.”¹⁰⁴ The excitement he claims to have felt foreshadows the fierce martial valence that would attach itself to the patriotic sublime

¹⁰² “National Music,” *The Chronicle or Harrisburgh Visitor*, Harrisburg, PA, September 5, 1814. Reprinted from the *Baltimore American*.

¹⁰³ Munro’s *Baltimore Patriot* was founded in 1812 as an avowedly Republican paper, but it unsurprisingly stressed the importance of national unity in the face of faction. The *American*, founded in 1799, was generally less political than the *Patriot* and printed more commercial news and advertising. But the article on “National Music” and the dual printings of “Defence of Fort M’Henry” show that the two papers still competed for the same audience when it came to news about the nation and the war. See *Baltimore Patriot*, December 28, 1812; and Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 Years, 1690-1940* (New York: McMillan, 1941), 188.

¹⁰⁴ Munro, 381-382.

by the time of the Mexican-American War: the celebration and even glorification of battle and death.

Given his excitement, it is no wonder he rushed his friend's song into print. Munro's prose introduction that accompanied "The Star Spangled Banner" was an unusual feature for printings of patriotic lyrics, but it quickly became standard in the early reprintings of Key's song, appearing in almost all other newspaper editions of 1814. It too stressed the "*you are there*" concrete sensory and emotional qualities of the song by merging a summary of the lyric with a recreation of Key's direct experience. It set the scene by reminding readers of the great danger faced by the city of Baltimore, but it put special emphasis on Key's agitated emotional state, asking readers to imagine Key as he "watched the flag at the Fort...with an anxiety that can be better felt than described." In effect, it cued readers on how to experience vicariously the military sublime.

In the only extant account of the bombardment Key wrote other than "The Star Spangled Banner" itself, he expressed himself in very similar terms, and it is hard to know who influenced whom among this group of literary friends. In a brief letter to his close friend John Randolph written almost a month after the song's initial publication, Key spoke of his "acute" feelings and wrote, "you may imagine the state of anxiety I endured" while on board the American packet.¹⁰⁵ In his memoir, John Skinner also emphasized their "anxiety" on deck that night and described Key's song as "a versified and almost literal transcript of our expressed hopes and apprehensions."¹⁰⁶

In the later and best-known retelling of the writing of "The Star Spangled Banner" published by Key's friend Roger Taney in 1857, Taney was also at pains to emphasize

¹⁰⁵ Key to Randolph, Oct. 5 1814, Howard Papers, Box 8, MdHS.

¹⁰⁶ John S. Skinner, letter to *Baltimore Patriot*, May 23 1849, 347.

both Key's anxiety and his status as an eyewitness.¹⁰⁷ Taney writes that "the scene" in the song was "not the offspring of mere fancy or poetic imagination." Rather, Key "describes what he actually saw. And he tells us what he felt while witnessing the conflict, and what he felt when the battle was over." Describing Key's visit to his home several days after the bombardment, Taney underscores his friend's emotional state:

[Key] proceeded then with much animation to describe the scene on the night of the bombardment. He and Mr. Skinner remained on deck during the night, watching every shell, from the moment it was fired, until it fell, listening with breathless interest to hear if an explosion followed....They paced the deck for the residue of the night in painful suspense, watching with intense anxiety for the return of day....He then told me that, under the excitement of the time, he had written a song...¹⁰⁸

In his description, Taney incorporates seemingly unselfconsciously language common to the earlier accounts: an animated Key in "painful suspense" and "intense anxiety" as he "paced the deck" composing "The Star Spangled Banner" under the immediate influence of "the excitement of the time." Taney's position echoes the earliest narratives of "The Star Spangled Banner"'s composition.

Munro's introduction was evidently important enough to printers around the nation that it was in almost every case paired with the lyric. Like other versions of the origins of "The Star Spangled Banner," it framed the song as an eyewitness account written while the author was still in a state of heightened emotional sensitivity induced by his experience. Its promoters apparently valued this "beautiful and animating effusion" precisely because they regarded it as capable of inducing a similar "animating" experience in its readers and auditors. The initial publication of the song was therefore a decisive moment in the propagation of the patriotic sublime.

¹⁰⁷ Taney originally wrote it as a letter to Key's son-in-law Charles Howard after Key's death in 1843, after which he published it with Key's collection of poems.

¹⁰⁸ Taney, 13-14, 24-26.

Beyond Baltimore: Print Media, Performance, and “The Star Spangled Banner”

“The Star Spangled Banner” and its brand of consensual patriotism spread rapidly through live performances and with the help of print media in the moment of national triumph immediately following the War of 1812. The song would prove to be an especially popular feature of future nationalist political rituals and one that invited a broad public to construct a common patriotic meaning through the celebration of military victory. The growth of far-flung print markets was essential to what Richard Brown calls the “democratization of gentility” in the first half of the nineteenth century because of its ability to “broadcast” cultural knowledge, including sensibility, to a “vast, amorphous middle class.”¹⁰⁹ “The Star Spangled Banner” and its success was a prime example of the propagation of musical culture through print in local markets and across regions.

Starting on September 16, 1814, newspapers began printing tense, fragmentary, and inconclusive reports of the fighting in Baltimore: one printed letter from a soldier in the midst of the battle ended “To-morrow decides the fate of Baltimore.”¹¹⁰ As soon as they received news of the outcome, editors and publishers published celebratory summaries of the victory that praised the city’s patriotism. “The Baltimoreans have done well, and truly merit the united thanks of our beloved country,” wrote the editor of the *New York Mercantile Advertiser*. A Vermont newspaper printed an extract of a letter ending, “the Baltimoreans have done wonders.” Another New York paper lauded Baltimore as “that patriotic city.” The bombardment of Fort McHenry became a national

¹⁰⁹ Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power*, 274. See also Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, 402-410.

¹¹⁰ *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, PA, September 16, 1814; *New-York Commercial Advertiser*, September 17, 1814.

story through such reports, and Key's lyric often accompanied or closely followed them. For example, the citizens of Middlebury, Vermont read the military dispatch about the Baltimore victory, including the "peculiarly trying" circumstances undergone by the "gallant individuals" inside the Fort, in their weekly paper on October 12. "Defence of Fort M'Henry" appeared the following week.¹¹¹ Key's lyric, along with detailed accounts of the bombardment, reinforced praise of Baltimoreans' patriotism and bravery.

Like news of the victory, "The Star Spangled Banner" spread quickly. Its first appearance outside Baltimore was in New York's *Mercantile Advertiser* on the morning of September 22, just two days after its newspaper publication in Baltimore.¹¹² This was fast transmission for the time: Key's "beautiful and animating effusion" must have seemed an ideal evocation of the victory to editors eager for news and stories from Baltimore.¹¹³ After it moved from Baltimore to New York and Philadelphia, Key's song, still usually printed with the title, "Defence of Fort McHenry," and almost always accompanied by the vivid introduction first published in the September 17 broadside, was then disseminated to newspapers around the country. The song appeared in at least twenty-five different newspapers by November 10, when it was printed in the *Farmer's Repository* of Charlestown in western Virginia. Newspapers in Boston and Essex, Massachusetts first featured it on September 28, and it had reached Savannah, Georgia by October 4, where it appeared in the city's *Republican*, and *Savannah Evening Register*. A newspaper in Louisville, Kentucky printed "Defence of Fort M'Henry" just twenty-

¹¹¹ *New York Mercantile Advertiser*, September 17, 1814; *Green-Mountain Farmer* (Bennington, VT), September 27, 1814; *New York National Advocate*, September 19, 1814; *Columbian Patriot* (Middlebury VT), October 12 and 19, 1814.

¹¹² *Mercantile Advertiser*, New York, New York, September 22, 1814.

¹¹³ Allan Pred calculates that it took 2.1 days on average for news to travel between Baltimore and New York in 1817. See Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information*, 46. Cf. Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 119.

seven days after its first New York printing – about as fast as it was possible to relay news between the two cities in 1814. In its initial newspaper circulation, Key’s song was printed in at least ten states and the District of Columbia, including at least thirteen printings in mid-Atlantic states (including Washington and Georgetown), eight in New England, and four in the south and west.¹¹⁴

Magazines also got into the act in late fall. “The Star Spangled Banner” appeared in a magazine for the first time in the November 1814 issue of the nationally-distributed *Analectic Magazine*. The editor echoed Munro’s sentiment that the song was “destined to outlast the occasion.” Noting that it had “already been published in several of our newspapers,” he commented that the “merit” of Key’s song “entitles [it] to preservation in some more permanent form than the columns of a daily paper.” This is the only extant magazine publication of the song in the initial burst of printings, but it also appeared in *Niles’ Weekly Register*, another nationally distributed periodical, and in the *Boston Recorder*, a religious magazine, in 1816. All of these printings included the original prose introduction. By this time, Key’s song had a broad national readership and was becoming a standardized print product.¹¹⁵

A comparison of the dissemination of “The Star Spangled Banner” with the earlier “Hail, Columbia” suggests the articulation of a different mode of patriotic

¹¹⁴ *Farmer’s Repository*, Charlestown, Virginia, November 10, 1814; *Boston Patriot, Essex Register*, September 28, 1814; *Western Courier*, October 19, 1814. See Filby and Howard, 119-123, for a partial list of printings. The New England printings included pro-war papers such as the *Boston Patriot* and *New Hampshire Patriot*, but not Federalist anti-war papers. Commercial newspapers such as New York’s *Mercantile Advertiser*, which had the largest circulation of any New York paper, also printed the song, as did Washington’s *National Intelligencer*, which was largely non-partisan. See Mott, *American Journalism*, 133, 177-178, 188, 198. See Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information*, 44, 48, for approximate speeds of circulation. Pred calculates the “mean lag time” in 1817 for newspaper publications between New York and Cincinnati, Ohio as 19 days, and that from Cincinnati to Louisville as 8 days. The lag time would presumably have been the same or slightly longer than these 27 days in 1814.

¹¹⁵ *Analectic Magazine* (Philadelphia), November 1814; *Niles’ Weekly Register* (Baltimore), February 24, 1816; *Boston Recorder*, May 8, 1816. See also Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957-1968), 138, 279-280.

sentiment with changing political circumstances. The breadth and speed of “The Star Spangled Banner’s” spread was thanks in part to the more extensive print network of 1812, but this was not the sole explanation. In 1798, newspaper editors were aligned staunchly along political battle lines, had to consider carefully the ideological content of a song as they interpreted it. “Hail, Columbia” first appeared in print in the *Philadelphia Gazette* of April 26, 1798. News of its first performance on April 25, 1798 had reached New York by April 28, although the song itself was not published in New York until the 30.¹¹⁶ There were ten printings of “Hail, Columbia” in the month after its first publication, as compared to more than twice that many of “The Star Spangled Banner,” yet the number of newspapers grew only by 58 percent between 1800 and 1810.¹¹⁷ Although “Hail, Columbia” was a prominent patriotic song, it did not circulate nearly as quickly or as widely as “The Star Spangled Banner.” The unifying pressure of wartime meant that most papers could safely print “The Star Spangled Banner,” and its distinctive musical and lyric register apparently also helped to convince editors of its political neutrality. Its broad reach compared to “Hail, Columbia” is evidence that patriotic music and nationalist sentiment continued to evolve in tandem.

The dissemination of other patriotic songs during the War of 1812 exhibited similar patterns, but also highlighted the uniquely evocative punch of “The Star Spangled Banner.” Americans were quick to carry positive war news to large urban areas and their hinterlands; celebratory patriotic songs often accompanied such news. Two signal

¹¹⁶ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, April 28, 1798, and *New York Daily Advertiser*, April 30, 1798. This time lag in 1798 is comparable to that between Baltimore and New York in 1814; see Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information*, 39. See also Sonneck, “Critical Notes on the Origin of ‘Hail Columbia.’”

¹¹⁷ The number of newspapers published went from 235 to 371 between 1800 and 1810, as the population of the country was growing from over 5 million to over 7 million. See Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information*, 21.

American triumphs of the war illustrate this. In late August 1812, the United States frigate *Constitution* sank a British counterpart, the *Guerriere*, in a single-ship action some 400 miles off the coast from Halifax, Nova Scotia. For the British, conditioned to consider their navy invincible, the defeat was a jarring shock; for the jubilant Americans it was a welcome surprise.

At least 26 printings of *Constitution/Guerriere* songs appeared between September 1 and November 20, 1814 (approximately the same time span it took for “The Star Spangled Banner” to make its way to Kentucky). Two years later, American land and naval forces inflicted a crucial defeat on the British at Lake Champlain in upstate New York, just before the Battle of Baltimore. As with the defense of Fort M’Henry and the *Constitution/Guerriere* battle, songs appeared with the glad news after the Battle of Plattsburgh: at least seventeen of them in a similar time period. All three of these events—indeed seemingly every bit of good news during the war—was a chance to celebrate with patriotic music. Like “The Star Spangled Banner,” songs based on the other two events appeared quickly in the major urban areas up and down the East Coast, with examples appearing in multiple newspapers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston.¹¹⁸ From these primary nodes, songs branched out to small towns in the hinterlands, appearing in fifteen states in the North, South, and West. Overall, the size

¹¹⁸ See for example *Boston Independent Chronicle*, September 17, 1812; *Charleston Investigator*, September 25, 1812; *New York Commercial Advertiser*, September 9, 1812; *New York Public Advertiser*, September 16, 1812; *Philadelphia Weekly Aurora*, September 29, 1812; *Hallowell American Advocate*, September 17, 1812. These and subsequent examples of *Constitution/Guerriere* and Plattsburgh songs in newspapers were located in Readex’s *America’s Historical Newspapers, Series 1-9*, encompassing collections from the American Antiquarian Society, the Library of Congress, and more than 90 other archives. See <http://www.readex.com/content/early-american-newspapers-1690-1922-series>. The tabulation omitted some examples of printed verse if it was not obvious they were set to a tune. For details of the *Constitution/Guerriere* action and the battle at Lake Champlain, see Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*; see also Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), chapters 2 and 3.

and scope of newspaper distribution of these songs is roughly similar to “The Star Spangled Banner.”

The difference between “The Star Spangled Banner” and these other examples of post-victory song dissemination lies in the content and number of songs. The 1812 frigate action produced at least twelve different songs printed in newspapers, all of them soon destined for obscurity. They contained some of the same elements that would make “The Star Spangled Banner” so memorable, including the concrete rendering of battle action and vivid description, such as “The blood from the enemy’s scuppers ran fast,” or “The *Guerriere* pours a flaming cloud [i.e. of gunfire].” But the action in most of these songs (as many as six of them, including titles such as “McDonough’s Victory,” “Yankee Sea Fight,” and “Hull’s Victory, or, Huzza for the Constitution!”) sprawled over stanza after stanza, unlike Key’s tightly compressed narrative. One example, set to an old English nursery song called “O My Kitten, My Kitten” (in use in America since the Revolution), even cast the event in a light-hearted parodic tone: “Militia go pipiti pop, / Yankee doodle dandy, / Push ‘em all into the water / Whenever they push in the landy!”¹¹⁹

“The Star Spangled Banner” was the sole representative in music of the events in Baltimore; as such, it was disseminated much more broadly than any single *Constitution/Guerriere* or Plattsburgh song. Newspapers printed at least eight different songs after the Battle of Plattsburgh. In addition, only two printings of these songs, both

¹¹⁹ For “MacDonough’s Victory” see for example *New York Columbian*, September 15, 1814. Based on its scansion, this lyric was likely set to “Yankee Doodle.” For the song set to “O My Kitten,” see *Northern Sentinel* (Burlington, VT), October 7, 1814; also Arthur M. Schlesinger, “A Note on Songs as Patriot Propaganda 1765-1776,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (Jan., 1954): 78-88; William Chappell, *Old English Popular Music, vols. I-II* (London, 1893). For examples of *Constitution/Guerriere* songs, see *New York Evening Post*, Sep 9, 1812; *Palladium of Liberty* (Morristown, NJ), Sep 10, 1812; *Washington, D.C. Courier*, Sep 11, 1812; *American Watchman* (Wilmington, DE), Sep 16, 1812; *American Advocate* (Hallowell, ME), Sep 17, 1812; *Charleston Times*, Sep 19, 1812; *New-Jersey Journal* (Elizabethtown NJ), Sep 22, 1812; *Green-Mountain Farmer* (Bennington, VT), Sep 23, 1812.

celebrating the Plattsburgh victory, appear in Western states (one each in Ohio and Kentucky). The press failed to coalesce around a single song for those two victories.

Most songs that contributed to the explosion of patriotic music over the next three decades were like the *Constitution/Guerriere* and Plattsburgh songs: these evanescent marches, quicksteps, and other songs would appear and disappear, serving as affective signifiers and drivers of patriotic sentiment until the next march came along. They broadened and deepened the category of patriotic music, at the summit of which stood songs like “Hail, Columbia” and especially “The Star Spangled Banner.”

In addition to its dissemination in newspapers, Americans also popularized “The Star Spangled Banner” through performance, often with the support of printed publicity. In the days immediately following the victory at Fort McHenry, citizens and soldiers all over the city staged performances of the song. Charles Durang, son of the theater veteran John Durang and a performer himself had patriotically joined the militia before the British assault. He later recalled a performance of “The Star Spangled Banner” in front of a tavern next to the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore. His brother sang the song, accompanied by a “chorus” of “about twenty volunteer soldiers” who read from the original broadside. There were likely many such impromptu renditions in the weeks following the attack on the city.¹²⁰ The first printed notice of a concert performance was an October 17, 1814 playbill; it announced that “a much admired new song...called *THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER*” would be performed as part of a theatrical performance at the Baltimore Theatre. Such concerts depended on newspaper advertisements and

¹²⁰ This letter was first printed in the *Historical Magazine*, 8, no. 10 (Boston: Oct. 1864), 347-348. Charles Durang’s brother Ferdinand was long credited as the first performer of the song, based in part on this letter, but twentieth century investigations cast doubt on his precedence. See Sonneck, *The Star Spangled Banner*, 72-76; Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 61.

playbills to create word of mouth and attract an audience. This playbill is also the first time Key's song was titled "The Star Spangled Banner," which quickly became standard. The same advertisement was repeated the next day in both the Baltimore *American* and *Patriot*, and on November 12 another playbill announced a second performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" at the Baltimore Theatre. The *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser* noted on November 18 that "The Star Spangled Banner" had been "repeatedly sung at the Theatre" to "continued applause." Printed announcements of performances of "The Star Spangled Banner" also demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between print and oral culture in the transmission of a patriotic song.¹²¹

Patriotic songs published in songsters and sheet music also highlighted the links between performance and commercial print culture. As important as newspapers and broadsides were for dissemination and for casual performance, they lacked permanence. The songster, designed to provide inexpensive and portable access to a large body of music, could be used repeatedly to fuel transmission of a song. This was certainly the case with "The Star Spangled Banner" in 1814 and in the following years. In the *National Songster*, published in Hagerstown, Maryland and one of at least four songsters to print "The Star Spangled Banner" in 1814, Key's lyric appeared under its original name, "Defence of Fort M'Henry." An 1814 songster from Newburyport, Massachusetts published it with *both* titles, illustrated with a depiction of a fort flying an American flag. Such visual icons began to appear frequently alongside the song after the initial spate of newspaper publications. Finally, a Wilmington, Delaware newspaper carried an advertisement in 1816 for a songster *titled* "The Star Spangled Banner," a collection of

¹²¹ Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 58, 90-91, 122-123. On theatre performance, see Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 86. He notes that, unlike newspapers, few playbills have survived from the period.

“the best Naval, *Martial*, Patriotic Songs, &c.”¹²² These songsters indicate both the mass circulation of “The Star Spangled Banner” and its standardization under its permanent name.

The first sheet music publication of “The Star Spangled Banner” also dates from 1814. At that time sheet music had not become the mass commercial product it would later in the century; it was reminiscent of the sheet music of “La Marseillaise” printed in 1793, though its reach was beginning to creep down towards middling folk. However, sheet music as one of many printed forms of patriotic song certainly played a role in the initial transmission of “The Star Spangled Banner” to elites and middling sorts, for whom the possession of a piano and sheet music signaled genteel domesticity. Sheet music also helped standardize the song through repeated use of the same editions of the lyric and the musical arrangement and notation accompanying it. Thomas Carr’s initial printing, for example, was copied and republished in Philadelphia, New York, Georgetown, and Baltimore over the next two years, sometimes with a visual element from the lyric added. An 1816 Philadelphia edition adds a visual element to highlight the meaning of the lyric: the staves are topped by a waving flag breaking through a cloud, the rising sun behind it (Figure 1.7).¹²³

“The Star Spangled Banner” was not alone: foreshadowing the great expansion of the sheet music business, publishers eagerly inked other patriotic songs. A song

¹²² *National Songster*, (Hagerstown, MD: 1814), Early American Imprints, Evans Series, American Antiquarian Society; Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 87; *American Watchman*, (Wilmington, DE), May 25, 1816.

¹²³ All extant sheet music until a New York publication in the 1830s was based on Thomas Carr’s original publication or variations of it. See Steven Muller, *The Star Spangled Banner: Words and Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 28-29, 49-52, 80-84; Filby and Howard, *Star Spangled Books*, 135, 138.

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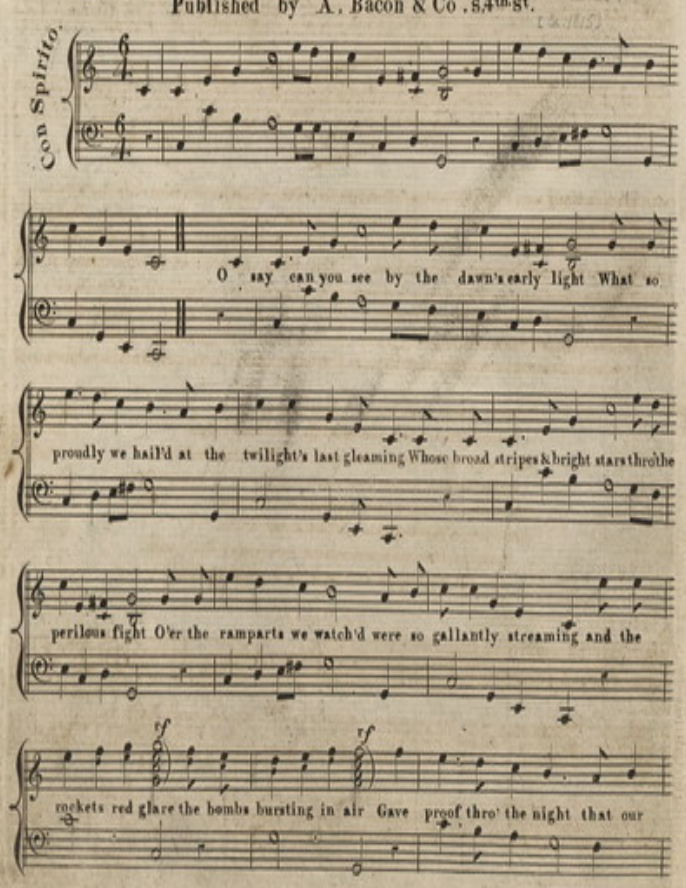


STAR SPANGLED BANNER.

PHILADELPHIA

Published by A. Bacon & Co. 54th st.

Con Spirito.



O say can you see by the dawn's early light What so
proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming Whose broad stripes & bright stars thro' the
perilous fight O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming and the
rockets red glare the bombs bursting in air Gave proof thro' the night that our

Figure 1.7. Sheet Music of "The Star Spangled Banner," (Philadelphia: A. Bacon, c. 1816). Music Division, Library of Congress.

celebrating Isaac Hull's victory in the *Constitution* over the British *Guerriere* is an important example. Probably published in 1814, "Hull's Victory" notes a recent performance by "Mr. Hardinge" at the Chestnut St. (Philadelphia) Theatre, and includes a rare parallel to Isaac Munro's vivid prose introduction to "The Star Spangled Banner" (see Figure 1.8). In this case, the introduction is drawn from Captain Hull's published dispatches. It lacks the visceral impact of Munro's prose, but does provide a scene-setting visual for the performer, who could imagine the *Constitution* heaving alongside the British ship and beginning a "heavy fire from all our guns."¹²⁴ The steady publication of sheet music of "The Star Spangled Banner" and other patriotic songs indicates that the private sphere of the home was an important site for the expression of patriotic pride.¹²⁵

News of Andrew Jackson's victory in the Battle of New Orleans and the peace treaty signed at Ghent arrived in the printing centers of the nation at almost the same time and produced the outpouring of joyous reports already familiar from previous victories during the war, but this time inflected by the euphoria of peace. Celebrations in the immediate aftermath of the war encompassed orations, parades, dinners, toasts, and illuminations, familiar rituals that had characterized patriotic celebration since the revolution. Americans now used these rituals to express national unanimity in the wake of victory.¹²⁶ They celebrated with rituals invoking republican values: for example, the

¹²⁴ "Hull's Victory," n.d., Levy Collection, Box 85, Item 31; see also Playbill, October 19, 1814, Ephemera Collection, W48, Maryland Historical Society. Hardinge was also one of the first performers of "The Star Spangled Banner," singing it at the Holliday St. Theatre in Baltimore on October 19. "Hull's Victory" was a contra dance possibly based on a Scottish dance tune. It remained steadily popular and was printed in dance manuals throughout the century. See Simon J. Bronner, *Old-Time Music Makers of New York State* (Syracuse, NY, 1987), 211n8.

¹²⁵ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 230-236, 241; Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 57-58; H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States*, 52-53.

¹²⁶ Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 192, 198-200; Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 295.

1

HULL'S VICTORY.

A New Patriotic Song

Sung with great applause by M. Hardinge.

AT THE
PHILADELPHIA THEATRE.

Written by Joseph Hutton.

Composed by
JOHN BRAY.

"At five minutes before six P.M. being alongside within half pistol shot, commenced a heavy fire from all our guns, double shotted with round and grape. The fire was kept up for 15 minutes when the mizen mast went by the board, and his main yard in the slings and the hull rigging and sails much torn to pieces; in 15 minutes more the main and fore masts went, on seeing this we ceased firing, so that in 30 minutes after we got fairly alongside the enemy she surrendered, and had not a spar standing."

Captain Hull's dispatches.

<p>Constitution Capt. Hull, 54 guns 450 men, 7 killed and 7 wounded. Burthen 1444 $\frac{8}{98}$ Tons.</p>	<p>Guerriere Capt. Dacres, 49 guns 300 men, 15 killed 62 wounded 24 missing. Burthen 1084 Tons.</p>
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Moderato
Con Spirito.

The musical score is written for piano and features two systems. The first system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody in the treble staff is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system continues the melody and includes a grand staff with a treble and bass staff, featuring various dynamic markings including fortissimo (ff) and mezzo-forte (mf).

Philadelphia. Published by G. E. Blake.

Figure 1.8. Sheet Music of "Hull's Victory" (Philadelphia: G.E. Blake, n.d.). Lester S. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. Note the details from the action against the *Guerriere* published atop the song itself.

“triumphal arch” raised for Andrew Jackson in New Orleans that featured “two infants representing the goddesses of Liberty and Justice.” A celebration in Wilmington, Delaware, stressed the “national blessing of returning peace,” a widespread sentiment. But Americans’ pride in martial victory was common to almost all of these events, whether expressed as the “defeat of the enemy” in New Orleans or by invoking the “God of battles and armies” watching over the victorious Americans as in Wilmington’s celebration.¹²⁷

In the perception of many Americans, the War of 1812 inaugurated a moment of national consensus, the “era of good feelings,” during which they expressed a proud patriotism in a variety of registers. After the war, nationalist sentiment continued to be couched in terms of republican ideology and the animating passion of love of country. Sacral patriotism, the patriotism of Key’s refining fire, was also part of the national conversation, and Americans used “The Star Spangled Banner” in all these registers. But in the era between the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, Key’s song and references to it became especially prominent in patriotic usages that extolled the might of American arms. Use of “The Star Spangled Banner,” along with the majority of printed patriotic music, shifted direction from fodder for partisan ideological struggle to the expression of martial patriotism.

“The Star Spangled Banner” and its distinctive imagery was symbolically central to martial rhetoric in the post-war celebrations of 1815. Even before Congress proposed the legal standardization of the flag in 1817 (the legislation was passed in 1818),

¹²⁷ *Merrimack Intelligencer*, Haverhill, MA, March 4, 1815; *American Watchman*, Wilimington, DE, April 8, 1815.

newspapers often dubbed the flag the “star spangled banner.”¹²⁸ A report of the illuminations in Washington, D.C. that celebrated the end of the war featured a display of the “star-spangled banner of America” flying near city hall (as well as rockets “made...in imitation of the British Congreve”). In Philadelphia, toasters hailed the “star-spangled banner of Columbia” and fiercely praised American arms. *Niles’ Weekly Register*, based in Baltimore but having a national circulation, hailed the “Glorious News” that “*Peace is signed in the arms of victory*” by quoting Key’s lyric: “‘The star spangled banner in triumph shall wave/o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.’” And at a celebratory dinner for Andrew Jackson in Georgetown, one of the volunteer toasts was to “The Star Spangled Banner—in peace may it always wave—in war VICTORIOUSLY.”¹²⁹ Celebrants and the editors who printed and commented on news of victory considered the “star spangled banner”—both the flag and the song—an especially apt symbol for victory in battle.

Just as the broadly ideological content of the patriotic songs of the 1790s were pressed into serving the needs of the “anti-party” federalist and republican parties, each of whom saw themselves as the sole legitimate inheritor of the spirit of ’76, so, during and immediately after the War of 1812, “The Star Spangled Banner” was disseminated in a particular political moment, and its performance influenced that moment.¹³⁰ In the flush of victory Americans celebrated a seemingly unified nation. Federalists at the Hartford Convention continued to sulk; dissent, in the form of alternate and even subversive

¹²⁸ Legislative reports of the proposed standardization itself in 1816 and 1817 were frequently titled “The Star Spangled Banner.” See for example *New York Evening Post*, December 26, 1816; *Georgia Journal* (Milledgeville, GA), January 1, 1817; *Newport Mercury*, November 18, 1817.

¹²⁹ *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, December 11, 1817; *The Weekly Aurora*, Philadelphia, February 28, 1815; *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), February 20, 1815; *Niles’ Weekly Register* (Baltimore), February 18, 1815; *Albany Argus*, December 5, 1815.

¹³⁰ Hofstadter, *Idea of a Party System*, 8-9; Waldstreicher, *In The Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 113-117.

expressions of patriotism, was always present in the form of race, class, and sectional tensions. Still, the patriotic sublime would invite Americans to participate in a harmonious national community united by common sentiments.

Music with patriotic themes or signifiers reflected the growth of musical culture. As Americans developed, adapted, diversified, and even began to formalize their musical practices, it seemed that any music could carry patriotic overtones. All of this musical activity vastly extended the field for nationalist sentiment. At the same time, the discourse about musical practice grew more complex as citizens wrote, talked, and argued about its purpose and meaning, especially its relation to patriotism and nation.

—Chapter Two—

Local Performance Spaces, National Musical Networks

When Charles and Ferdinand Durang joined a group of fellow militiamen in front of a tavern next door to the Holliday Street Theatre to sing “The Star Spangled Banner,” they were not amateur singers taking part in an impromptu performance. They were part of a theatrical family whose patriarch, John Durang, had traveled extensively in theatrical and circus troupes around the eastern United States and into Canada during the early Republic. The senior Durang was best known for his dancing, but was also a singer, musician, propmaster, set designer, and salesman – a jack-of-all-trades. His career, and those of his sons, typified that of the peripatetic performers whose multiple talents filled nearly every role a musician could in antebellum America. The Durang family and others like them created and traveled along the strands of a performative network that knit together disparate spaces into a musical culture, disseminating patriotic music across the nation and consolidating the patriotic sublime.

Between the late 1790s, when John Durang departed on a circus tour to Canada, and the late 1820s, when Baltimore celebrated the birth of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad with patriotic pomp, Americans built a national musical culture connecting cities, towns, and their hinterlands. If burgeoning print networks sparked the dissemination of “The Star Spangled Banner,” performance was powered by a parallel revolution in transportation: new canals, innovative technology like steamboats, and finally the advent of the railroad.¹ Transportation improvements were a crucial element of the fast-developing national economy, encouraging commercial links between regions and a flourishing consumer culture that fostered the habits and language of refinement.²

During this era, Americans began to construct and connect musical institutions, spaces, and routes. Performers and audiences together elaborated a rich and flexible culture of music that was initially characterized by a broad variety of multi-purpose venues and temporarily repurposed sites. Musical culture in urban centers such as Cincinnati and Baltimore was propagated throughout the country by performers who could adapt quickly and readily to local needs, and were willing to find or even build temporary performance spaces as needed. As they elaborated this cultural network, Americans increasingly desired permanent spaces for their music, a process that would accelerate after the Civil War: this activity led to more settings that performers and audiences coded as appropriate for specific genres of music: an opera house, for example,

¹ See Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, chap. 6; on the Baltimore & Ohio railroad, see James Dilts, *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore & Ohio* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

² Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America*; Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, eds. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982); Jean-Christophe Agnew, “Coming Up for Air: Consumer Culture in Historical Perspective,” in Lawrence B. Glickman, ed., *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture: Image, Object, Text* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

or a public garden for dance music. At the same time, many venues retained enough flexibility to be blend commercial performance with civic purpose: theaters could be rented for a melodrama or a genteel concert, and a public garden normally dedicated to entertainment could host a Fourth of July celebration.³

This flexibility meant that patriotic music was commonly performed in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor spaces, and therefore reached diverse audiences. As venues began to become more closely associated with specific styles and genres of music, patriotic music and the patriotic sublime retained a place even in the more specialized commercial performances, whether it was melodrama, minstrel show, instrumental concert, or other ticketed musical event. Meanwhile, patriotic music remained central to civic contexts. The elaboration of commercial and civic space helped propagate patriotic music widely, and with it the patriotic sublime.

Performers spread out from east coast cultural centers like New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, following migrants across the Appalachians and entertaining audiences in new towns and cities along the Ohio and Mississippi River systems like Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis. This chapter begins with the rough and ready performance circuit around the turn of the nineteenth century, following John Durang as he danced and sang in towns and cities across the hinterlands of Baltimore and Philadelphia and up into Canada. It continues into the second section by exploring musical spaces in Cincinnati, so-called “Queen City of the West,” which was a central node in a network of traveling performers stretching east from the mid-Atlantic and south to New Orleans. Both sections utilize the memoirs of some of these traveling performers,

³ Henri Lefebvre, Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans., *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); see also Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 160-161.

which were often written after the fact by actor-musicians like John Durang or Solomon Smith. Contrasting the more settled maturity of their professional careers with picaresque tales of their early travels and struggles, memoirists like Durang, Smith, Noah Ludlow, William Wood, and others highlighted the ad-hoc entertainment culture of the early nineteenth century and the subsequent beginnings of a shift to a more settled and specialized world, in the process dramatizing their own upward mobility.

The third section returns east to Baltimore and its more well- established musical culture, where commercial and civic spectacles, including plays, parades, and circuses, all accompanied by music, resounded in the city's streets and theaters.⁴ Baltimore, like other cities, gradually replaced its ramshackle wooden theaters with more permanent structures. Commercial spectacles in theaters, concert halls, and elsewhere continued to attract diverse and sometimes rowdy audiences throughout the era, even as reformers called for more refined audience comportment.⁵ Such audiences spilled into outdoor spaces, where elaborate civic rituals spread the patriotic sublime. In this chapter, I will show how patriotic music in association with visual symbols of nationalism traversed diverse venues and helped knit together urban cultural centers and small towns via a network of musicians that connected the country as a whole.

Improvising Performance in the American Hinterlands

⁴ On theatrical spectacle, see David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 76-93; Robert M. Lewis, ed., *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville: Theatrical Spectacle in America, 1830-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Helen Stoddart, *Rings of Desire: Circus History and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), Part I.

⁵ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), Part 1 *passim*; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39.

In 1797, Philadelphia native John Durang navigated by boat past the military academy at West Point. He was traveling up the Hudson River as part of a circus troop, led by British émigré and circus innovator John Bill Ricketts, that was bound for upstate New York and Canada. As the West Point cadets started to drill on shore, Durang undoubtedly heard the fife and drum, and he and two others “play’d ‘Washington’s March with wind instruments.”⁶ Durang’s impromptu musical salute was typical of traveling musicians’ improvised performances and illustrates the close relationship between commercial entertainment and patriotic music.

The descendants of Jacob Durang, a French barber and surgeon who joined the American revolutionaries in 1775, were a family of actors and musicians. The first theatrical Durang was Jacob’s son John, born in Philadelphia in 1768, and performing by the age of seventeen in Lewis Hallam, Jr.’s renowned Old American Company. As was typical in the theatrical world, Durang’s wife and children were all in the business as well. His sons Charles and Ferdinand were also accomplished actors and musicians; Charles eventually made his way into theatrical management in Philadelphia and penned a history of theatre in that city.⁷

John Durang was the archetype of the actor and performer in early America: an artisanal tradesman. In his unpublished memoir written sometime between 1816 and his death in 1823, Durang presented himself as a jack-of-all-trades: “although his only

⁶ John Durang, ed. Alan S. Downer, *The Memoir of John Durang, American Actor, 1785-1816* (Pittsburgh: Published for the Historical Society of York County and for the American Society for Theatre Research by the University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966), 48.

⁷ See Charles Durang, *History of the Philadelphia Stage Between the Years 1749 to the Present Time*, (Philadelphai, 1868); See also David L. Rinear, *Stage, Page, Sacandals, and Vandals: William E. Burton and Nineteenth-Century American Theatre* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press), 113; Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, introduction; Oscar G. Sonneck, *Report on “The Star Spangled Banner,”* 15-16.

formal training was as apprentice to a dancing master, he painted scenery, built playhouses, performed acrobatic and equestrian feats, constructed a puppet show, developed summer amusement parks, organized and directed acting companies...devised transparencies, pyrotechnic displays, and pantomimes, and played minor roles in legitimate drama.”⁸ He also sang and mastered several musical instruments, skills that were necessary for performers of almost any kind in eighteenth and nineteenth century America. Durang wrote of his childhood in York, Pennsylvania, that “all kinds of diversions going on during the whole day, the taverns crowded: in every room a fiddle, and dancing, bottles of wine on the table; showfolks with their signs out, hand organs and trumpits [*sic*] to invite the people to see poppet [*sic*] shows, wire dancing, slight of hand.”⁹ This description characterized both his career and early American performing arts in general.

Durang’s schooling, such as it was, was *ad hoc* and largely obtained on the job, mirroring the needs of a nascent musical performance culture in which trained labor was scarce and one performed as needed at the moment, regardless of genre or even art form. Born in Yorktown, he grew up largely in and around Philadelphia and caught the theatrical bug as young as fifteen: “music and dancing was my attraction; I was noticed for my dancing.” During an informal apprenticeship, he began his first tour, traveling from Philadelphia to New York to Boston with stops in at least a dozen towns along the way.¹⁰

⁸ A transparency was a type of theatrical scrim. Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, xiii.

⁹ Ibid, 5.

¹⁰ Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, xiii-xiv.

Even as a teenager, Durang was a multifaceted craftsman, mingling his own apprenticeship with teaching. In Boston he attended the dancing school of a “Mr. Turner” and ended up helping the master, especially with the dance figures of the hornpipe, for which Durang even gave private lessons.¹¹ While in New York, Durang learned the violin, taking individual lessons from a Mr. Phile, and the German flute. He also studied the French horn and the flagelet (a kind of small flute). Even though Durang identified himself as a dancer, musical training was necessary for the wide-ranging theatrical roles expected of him and others. As Durang put it: “In short, I was performer, machinist, painter, designer, music compiler, the bill maker, and treasurer.”¹² Durang was fully ready to occupy the roles demanded by the growing markets and multi-purpose performance venues along his far-flung network.

Other performers’ early training was equally unsystematic. William B. Wood, later co-manager of theaters in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, made his first stage appearance in 1798 in Annapolis thanks to his father’s friendship with Thomas Wignell, who managed the Old American Company along with Lewis Hallam (John Durang was, as mentioned, one of their players). Wood approached Wignell with no performing background other than “a prize or two at school for elocution.”¹³ Noah Ludlow’s first exposure to the theater was a pantomime based on the Cinderella story in 1810, but his sternly religious parents disapproved of involvement in “such ‘delusions’ as

¹¹ The hornpipe is genre of dance music usually associated with Scottish, Irish, or British folk music, in strongly rhythmic duple time with either an even or dotted rhythm. “Durang’s Hornpipe” became a popular tune; Durang related that it was written for him by a “dwarf” in New York named Mr. Hoffmaster in 1785. See Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 13-14, 22; *Treatise on Dancing; and on various other matters, which are connected with that accomplishment, and which are requisite, to make youth well received, and regulate their behavior in company* (Boston: From the Press of the *Commercial Gazette*, 1802), 87.

¹² Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 68-69.

¹³ William B. Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage* (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1855), 45-47.

the theatre.” Ludlow left his home in Albany, New York at the age of twenty to join impresario Samuel Drake, Sr.’s troupe, “destined for the far West” of Kentucky. Ludlow, with no experience of performing or indeed the business of theater, was sent ahead to book performances in small towns on the route west – as he put it, he “was the only *man* of the small company” not engaged in the Albany season already. He would learn his craft as he went.¹⁴

Ludlow did manage to play at least one bit part, that of a “laughing peasant,” and he impressed young Solomon “Sol” Smith who recorded the performance in his memoir. Thanks to formative experiences like this one, Smith later wrote that his “head was full of acting from that time forward....my business (that of a clerk) was neglected; in brief, I became...stage-mad!” As was common in theatrical memoirs, Smith played up his abandonment of a safe and, by implication, normal career, for the peripatetic, thrilling life of the performer. He followed in Ludlow’s footsteps west to Cincinnati where he began a long acting and managing career. But his early training was, like Ludlow’s, informal.¹⁵ These early nineteenth century performers could not rely on established institutions to train them. The broad varieties of paths into the performing world were also the routes that carried patriotic song and the patriotic sublime across the expanding nation.

Lack of permanent or fixed theaters and the as-yet fickle audience for secular entertainments forced performers to trod the routes between cities and from cities to

¹⁴ Noah M. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It* (St. Louis: G.I. Jones, 1880), 3-7.

¹⁵ Smith and Ludlow became partners in theatrical management years later, then had a falling out and became bitter rivals. Smith, according to his memoir, was educated in a “log school-house” and would later make his lack of learning part of his persona; he was educated in “the great school of the world.” It should be noted that he was certainly familiar with martial music, his father having been a Revolutionary War fifer and one of his brothers a drummer and later drum-major on the *U.S.S. Constitution*. See Solomon Smith, *Sol. Smith’s Theatrical Apprenticeship, comprising a sketch of the first seven years of his professional life, together with anecdotes and sketches of adventure in after years* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1854), 14-16; 18-21; Solomon Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South, interspersed with Anecdotal Sketches* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868), 9-11.

hinterlands, even into the far West and Canada. Their livelihood depended on their ability to market themselves in new places and their flexible mastery of the variety of crafts necessary to find, prepare, or even build a place to perform. Sol Smith demonstrated his deft touch over this complex spatial calculus during a period in the early 1820s when he was editing a local newspaper in New Jersey. Taking advantage of his access, he printed “a few handbills,” with blank spaces left for the town and date, advertising a “concert of vocal music.” Smith then set off for Perth Amboy with “some music-books, a pair of breeches, and a red wig.”¹⁶

The program of Smith’s concert in Perth Amboy has not survived, but similar performances abounded at that time, and patriotic music was a regular feature. Upcoming national holidays were especially advantageous. Advertisers used commemorations as a hook for patriotic customers, like an 1820 concert in New York that capitalized on the upcoming anniversary of Andrew Jackson’s famous victory to program “The Battle of New Orleans” and “Behold the Columbia.”¹⁷ The Fourth of July was the biggest holiday for commercial patriotic performance: impresarios programmed elaborate festivities featuring colorful national imagery, diverse patriotic music, as well as fireworks and illuminations. Besides a military band, one such concert at a public garden in New York featured images of George Washington, a “Grand Naval and Military Column,” and an “American Eagle,”¹⁸ while in Boston, one Mrs. Burke, who appeared in concerts up and down the east coast in this period, was the focus of a similar series of garden concerts extending for weeks around the Fourth of July, from June through August of both 1816

¹⁶ All quotes in this paragraph are from Smith’s story related in his *Theatrical Apprenticeship*, 79-81.

¹⁷ *New York National Advocate*, January 8, 1820.

¹⁸ *New York Mercantile Advertiser*, July 1 1820.

and 1817.¹⁹ All of them featured patriotic music and nationalist images painted on transparencies and columns. Yet as important as national holidays could be, performers still had to be prepared to sing and play patriotic music through most of the year.

Sol Smith's more modest concert also demonstrated the flexibility and ingenuity demanded of these early performers if they were to mold performances to the demands of local audiences and utilize the local built environment to its advantage. Smith printed handbills that could be used anywhere to advertise his concert, prepared the music, found and rented tavern-space, and issued tickets. From the beginning of theater in America, performers exhibited this kind of ingenuity, as they gathered into troupes and travelling the as-yet incomplete performative networks of the time.²⁰ John Rickett's circus that opens the chapter was a typical effort; its 1797 tour to upstate New York and Canada provided employment for a small troupe of performers after their New York season closed in July.

The 1797 circus tour was typical of the commercial theatrical activity that tied small cities and towns in the interior to major northeastern urban centers during the Early Republic. They made use of performance spaces that already existed, or created temporary ones of their own. Ricketts and his troupe can be thought of as cultural pioneers, following the flow of citizens pushing west into the interior of the continent. Frontier communities were eager to host people who provided an evening or weekend's entertainment, and such events built a network of common musical and artistic culture that webbed together urban centers and their hinterlands. Artistic generalists like John

¹⁹ For examples see *Boston Gazette*, June 16, 1817; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, August 9, 1816.

²⁰ For example, Lewis Hallam senior's American Company, generally regarded as the first theatrical company in America, traveled a circuit between New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Annapolis, with diversions elsewhere. See William Dunlap, *A History of the American Theatre: From Its Origins to 1832* (Urbana, IL, 2005, reprint from 1832 edition).

Durang and his peers played a crucial role in elaborating this fragile but expanding culture.

Even in urban centers, the nomadic journeys of performers season to season meant that their performance spaces were not always permanent homes, despite the grandiose language sometimes attached to them. In 1795, Ricketts was in Philadelphia with his troupe, where he erected a circus (the term “circus” was applied to buildings and also to performing groups, which were sometimes also called “menageries”) called the “Art Pantheon and Amphitheatre,” complete with a “flying Mercury” at its apex fifty feet high and a central chandelier.²¹ Despite its grand adornments, it was the third such building that Ricketts’ company had erected to house performances in Philadelphia in four years (from 1793-97). Ricketts’ career in Philadelphia was cut short late in the decade, possibly as a result of Quaker agitation against the immoral circus, and ended with finality when his Art Pantheon burned down in 1799. The New York story of Ricketts’ company was much the same. Between 1793 and 1797, they arranged spring and fall seasons at three different locations, the last and best being a circular structure housing a ring, stage, and even a coffee house—which also burned down in 1799.²²

Even theatrical troupes with more permanent homes shuttled constantly between locales, such as the company of Thomas Wignell and Alexander Reinagle, proprietors of Philadelphia’s elegant brick Chestnut Street Theatre, with its marble fittings and sumptuous decorations, built between 1791 and 1794: “the finest theatre in America at

²¹ A circus in the 1790s was a sort of variety show including equestrian feats, tumbling and other acrobatics, theatrical pieces, and of course music. Isaac J. Greenwood, *The Circus: Its Origin and Growth Prior to 1835* (New York: William Abbatt, 1909), 77-86.

²² William L. Slout, *From Rags to Ricketts* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2012), 21-27; S.L. Kotar, J.E. Gessler, *The Rise of the American Circus, 1716-1899* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 56-62; Helen Stoddart, *Rings of Desire: Circus History and Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), chapter 2; Lynn Matluck Brooks, *John Durang* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011).

the time.”²³ Yet the Reinagle/Wignell company remained in motion, performing in Annapolis and Baltimore, touring smaller towns in the mid-Atlantic (in 1793, because of the outbreak of yellow fever in Philadelphia), and even putting on a summer season in New York at the Greenwich Street circus of John Ricketts, which “was fitted up and decorated as an elegant summer theatre.”²⁴

Temporary spaces received a patina of elegance, like Ricketts’ flying Mercury, meant to convey legitimacy, civic distinction, and refinement.²⁵ As early as the 1790s, the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia imported “crimson tabray, fringe and tassels, chandeliers, [and] girandoles” from Europe, and even scenery for ancillary chambers like card rooms.²⁶ By 1820, a theater as far west as Louisville had a “grand chandelier.”²⁷ The promoters of permanent theaters like the Chestnut Street Theatre or Boston’s Federal Street Theatre saw such “elegant” appointments as tools to inculcate genteel sensibilities, just as did William Dunlap. Dunlap felt strongly that proper theatrical performance could guide audiences towards genteel republican values: “where there is the best audience, there will be the best actors, and the best plays, and the most attractive decorations, music, and scenery, and to such a place even the vulgar will come for his own pleasure;

²³ J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884, vol. II* (Philadelphia, 1884), 971.

²⁴ William Dunlap, *A History of the American Theatre from its Origins to 1832*, 196. See also Dunlap, *History of the American Theatre*, chapters 10, 15, 20; Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century, together with the Day book of the same period* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933; reprint, Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1968).

²⁵ The definition of “tabray” is unknown; it may have been a specific kind of cloth for drapery or upholstery. Heather S. Nathans, *Early American Theatre from the Revolutions to Thomas Jefferson: Into the Hands of the People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 62-68.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁷ West T. Hill, Jr., *The Theatre in Early Kentucky: 1790-1820* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971, reprint 2015), 41.

and being restrained, will be eventually amended.”²⁸ He was arguing against those who still questioned the theatre’s legitimacy as a place fit for a gentleman.

Actors, musicians, and impresarios in antebellum America struggled against the perception of theaters, not to mention individual plays, as morally or socially problematic, injurious to individual character and republican virtue. Most performers at least paid lip service to the importance of moral entertainments: William Dunlap was not the only one who insisted on “proper exhibitions to set before a free and well-ordered people.”²⁹ The struggle over theatrical legitimacy pitted a genteel elite desiring an educated citizenry, against the mass of middling and lower class groundlings whose boisterous enjoyment of theatrical entertainment prompted constant complaints from elites of misbehavior. This battle, which was part of what one historian has described as indicative of a long-term shift from active to passive audiences, went on throughout the nineteenth century.³⁰

Reformers advocated the incorporation of patriotic symbols and practices in spaces like theaters because of their ability to refine and elevate feeling. For the same reason, they helped to legitimize secular, commercial entertainment and its performers. If theatre was morally suspect and at other times loudly lower-class, it also occasioned some of the most strident calls for unity under patriotic symbols. Playwright and novelist James Kirke Paulding advocated for a “national drama” that would “appeal...directly to

²⁸ Dunlap, *History of the American Theatre*, 189. On the Friendly Club, see Bryan Waterman, *Republic of Intellect: The Friendly Club of New York City and the Making of American Literature* (Baltimore, 2007).

²⁹ Quoted in William Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 156.

³⁰ Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1900* (Cambridge, 2000), Chapters 1-3; David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (Chicago, 1968), Chapters 1-3; Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong* (New York, 1987).

the national feeling.”³¹ He thought the theatre could “administer...to the just pride of national character, inspiring a feeling for national glory, and inculcating a love of country.”³² Patriotic images in permanent theaters, like the eagle over the proscenium at Chestnut Street or the national and state coats of arms hanging prominently above the stage at Boston’s Federal Street Theatre, were “an effort to claim the theater as an American institution.”³³ Such imagery helped link local and commercial spaces to a broader national purpose.

Patriotic symbols and music together were especially powerful. While performing in St. Louis in 1821, Noah Ludlow realized that several members of his company resembled the figures in Edward Savage’s popular 1804 painting of George Washington with his family, so they programmed a tableau of the scene set to patriotic music. As Ludlow later described the event:

...the band in the orchestra began the national air of ‘Hail Columbia,’ the curtain rose, strong white lights from behind the scenes threw a bright halo around the figures, and for a few moments there was the silence of astonishment – then came a thunder of applause that sensibly shook the building. I do not believe I ever beheld as much rapture displayed by an audience in my whole life.³⁴

The images of Washington and family, first disseminated in a late eighteenth century print and later reproduced in numerous formats combined with patriotic song to harness the emotions of the St. Louis crowd, giving them a “precise shape.”³⁵

³¹ Quoted in Dunlap, *History of the American Theatre*, 163-164; see also Edwin G. Burrows, Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 416-417.

³² Dunlap, *History of the American Theatre*, 164.

³³ Nathans, *Early American Theatre*, 72.

³⁴ Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It*, 213.

³⁵ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 112; see also Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology, and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 3-8; David Machin, *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text* (London: Sage Publications, 2010). On the

Patriotic music was a common point of reference for performers touring the young towns of western America. They used patriotic music and local print media to attract audiences to often-rudimentary settings. Noah Ludlow's 1821 St. Louis performance of "Hail, Columbia" took place in a new theater that replaced earlier temporary spaces. Still, the new theater was "a rough affair."³⁶ A few years earlier, Ludlow had toured from the east through Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Kentucky with the troupes of Samuel Drake and William Turner, when theatrical spaces were even more slapdash and, as they thought, ripe for improvement.³⁷ Drake actually took out an advertisement in a Louisville newspaper while his company was still in Pittsburgh, expressing his wish to "establish...theatrical amusements on a respectable and permanent plan"³⁸ in the Kentucky town. A year later, Ludlow was still describing Louisville's only theater as "dark, dingy, and dirty."³⁹ He sought to improve it through performances that included a "*patriotic lecture*" and "*patriotic songs*."⁴⁰

When John Durang and his companions finally reached Albany after their trip up the Hudson River, they were eagerly welcomed in what he called the "country town" of Albany, where they quickly obtained a spare plot of ground for their circus and threw up a "temporary constructure....divided half for the boxes, seats elevated with a roof, the other half for the pit, open and seats low, an orchestra, a moveable stage to dance on, a

dissemination of Edward Savage's "Washington and Family," see Tess Schwab, "Inclusion, Exclusion, and Transformation: Representing Slavery Through Edward Savage's 'The Washington Family,'" M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 2007, 38-43.

³⁶ William Hyde and Howard Lewis, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, vol. 4 (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1899), 2252-2253; see also F.L. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in its Territorial Days* (St. Louis, 1888), 74.

³⁷ Ludlow, *Dramatic Life*, 57-122, quote on 76.

³⁸ *Western Courier* (Louisville, KY), June 15, 1815.

³⁹ Ludlow quoted in Hill, Jr., *The Theatre in Early Kentucky*, 119.

⁴⁰ Hill, *Theatre in Early Kentucky*, 104; italics in original advertisement.

dressings room, and stable...a low fence round the ring.”⁴¹ They finished their temporary home in a week. Durang’s blithe description of what must have been an intense effort portrays a temporary space that was a rough facsimile of permanent structures elsewhere. Durang and his fellow performers built a more elaborate, yet still temporary, circus when they swung north into Canada. This one, in a small town near Montreal, had a roof with skylights and even a “coffee room.” The troupe hired the local regimental band to provide music for their shows.⁴² The inhabitants of provincial towns in upstate New York and Canada on Durang’s route welcomed the peripatetic journeys of such traveling theatrical troupes and knew what to expect from them: improvised spaces for familiar tunes and shows.

Traveling performers and their temporary venues served as links between regional population centers and small towns, and from region to region. Acting troupes and traveling circuses replicated commercial entertainment – both styles and the actual pieces – in different places as they traveled, contributing to a broadly shared popular culture. John Durang, while never again going as far afield as Canada, continued to strengthen local and regional performance networks on the Philadelphia/New York/Baltimore urban axis and through jaunts to smaller cities and towns in the countryside, including Carlisle and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he not only built a temporary theater in 1802, but also performed in private houses and taverns.⁴³ Patriotic performance was an important element of this process: displays of local unity were, over time, iterated throughout this

⁴¹ Downer, ed., *John Durang*, 47-49. The company consisted of half of Ricketts’ troupe: just six people, including Ricketts himself and Durang, as well as one musician, who would presumably provide music to accompany the other performers and arrange additional music when necessary.

⁴² Ibid, 67-70.

⁴³ Lynn Matluck Brooks, “John Durang’s Summer Tours,” *John Durang: Forming America on Stage*, York County Heritage Trust, <http://johndurang.yorkheritage.org>, accessed May 11, 2015.

performative web, transforming them into regional and national sequences of similar practices.

Durang found himself in Harrisburg in the summer of 1815, where he continued to perform in temporary spaces, working alongside local citizens in civic celebration. While performing at Hyneman's Hotel in Harrisburg (which he called the "theatre"), he joined in the town's July Fourth festivities, describing an Independence Day scene complete with parade, outdoor collation, and toasts, punctuated with martial sounds and the deft use of music. The townsfolk had temporarily turned a wooded spot on the edge of town into an outdoor concert hall with "fix'd tables and benches, bars and store rooms" and "an appropriate canopy decorated with the ensign and banners of America."⁴⁴ This canopy apparently defined or marked out an orchestral pit of some kind, which seems to have been surrounded on at least two sides by the citizenry: "The citizens sat in a circle devided [*sic*] by the canopy and orchestra."⁴⁵ Durang's band, the quasi-official music for the day, occupied the orchestra, and "all the young gentlemen of the town who could perform on any instrument of music play'd."⁴⁶ It was not uncommon for a theatrical band to join forces with amateur performers. The temporary space of the Harrisburg celebration, somewhere in between virgin woodland and constructed park (and bandstand), was suited to an improvisatory performative culture without a clear division between amateur and professional, or a strict delineation of spaces by genre or style of performance.

⁴⁴ Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 134.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

As with the majority of commentary on national civic festivities, Durang followed certain descriptive conventions in his journal. Since he probably intended it for eventual publication, this is not surprising. But his day-to-day entries show an easy familiarity with stock words and phrases that punctuated descriptions of patriotic rituals appearing in newspapers. In his entry on the Fourth of July in Harrisburg, he noted the “appropriate airs” played by the combined band of professionals and amateurs. A search through newspapers in Maryland and Pennsylvania, where Durang spent most of his life, shows 172 uses of the phrase “appropriate airs” in the period under consideration; writers employed similar phrases like “appropriate music” (167 times) or “appropriate songs” (35 times) often, almost always in a patriotic context. Patriotic narratives usually mentioned the “band of music,” which could be further described as “excellent,” “elegant,” or “select.” Other words describing the sounds of patriotic events, like “martial music” and short phrases noting cannon or musket fire, followed this same pattern.⁴⁷ Descriptions associated with the patriotic sublime circulated between formal public rhetoric in print and personal recollections and journals.

Durang’s description of the festivities showed that he was familiar with the narrative conventions followed by printed reports. Comparing the local newspapers’ description of the celebration for the Fourth of July in Harrisburg in 1814 to Durang’s description of the following year’s celebration in his memoirs highlights this narrative similarity. In 1815, Durang wrote that the celebration

was all sociability and harmony, without distinction, rich and poor: the whole appeared independence, liberty, and equality. All march’d in social bands to a pleasant spot situate on a hill in a wood near the north end of the town...

⁴⁷ This search covered 125 newspapers in Maryland and Pennsylvania from 1790-1848, using Readex’s *America’s Historical Newspapers*, digitized from the newspaper collection of the American Antiquarian Society. On Durang’s probable intent to publish, see Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, xiii-xiv.

In 1814, according to the Harrisburg paper, July Fourth festivities took place

In a style truly animated and patriotic. It was remarked by many, that so great a concourse of people was never before assembled in Harrisburg on a similar occasion. The citizens moved in procession from the court house...preceeded [*sic*] by a piece of artillery and a fine band of music, till they reached a handsome piece of woodland on the N.E. side of the town...

Narratives of patriotic celebrations across the country adhered to similar descriptions of the procession and the place of performance. They also emphasized martial noises: “an ordnance was fired” in Durang’s Harrisburg recounting, while the previous year featured “discharge[s] of a six pounder [cannon]” and “discharges of infantry [i.e. muskets].” Finally, narrators emphasized unity, fellow-feeling, and order at the denouement. For Durang in 1815, citizens “retired in good order and harmony;” the previous year saw them “dismissed in the most perfect friendship and good order.” Taken as a whole, printed narratives of patriotic events focused attention on utterances of republican virtue, order, and the ardent expression of patriotism, and were emulated in unpublished accounts.⁴⁸

During the Early Republic, performers like John Durang used patriotic music and symbolism as a point of reference as they built up local and regional performance networks from a grab bag of temporary venues. These sites were not defined by individual genres or well-codified standards of comportment, as modern venues often are. Performers instead used what was locally available, improvising spaces to their advantage. This elaboration of performance spaces occurred alongside the growth of print networks, and performers used the combination cleverly, like Sol Smith printing handbills for his hastily arranged New Jersey performance, or Samuel Drake taking out

⁴⁸ All quotes in this paragraph are from Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 134 (for the 1815 celebration), and *The Chronicle or Harrisburgh Visitor* (Harrisburg, PA), July 11, 1814.

an advertisement in Louisville months ahead of his troupe's arrival. John Durang's journal records the result in Harrisburg, where on the Fourth of July 1815 "the 'Star Spangled Banner' was sung in many companies."⁴⁹ A year after the composition and initial print dissemination of Francis Scott Key's new song, it was a familiar part of performances in multiple Harrisburg venues. The spatial network, integrated with local print media, framed patriotic music as a popular and broadly shared national form. Performers communicated the patriotic sublime as they created familiar space in the theatrical vacuum of the countryside.

Cincinnati: Performance Spaces from Frontier to Urban Center

Founded in 1788 (as Losantiville, and often identified with the military base, Fort Washington, that was built at the same time to protect the white inhabitants from Indian attack), Cincinnati quickly became a cultural and economic leader of the western United States, thanks in large part to its fortuitous location astride one of the primary channels of western migration and trade. Cincinnati benefitted from one of the most important economic routes connecting the interior hinterlands of the urban centers on the eastern seaboard with New Orleans. The long river route tracing the Ohio and Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico flowed past Cincinnati's doorstep, linking the Queen City to both the East and South. Its strategic geography turned Cincinnati into a commercial powerhouse, rivaled in the West only by St. Louis, and only after the Civil War eclipsed as an economic engine by Chicago (see Figure 2.1). Over the course of two generations, the city grew from the handful of original settlers to a prosperous town of 10,000 by 1820,

⁴⁹ Downer, ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 135.



Figure 2.1. *Eastern United States*. Image courtesy d-maps.com 9 http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=24600&lang=en). Cincinnati's location on the Ohio River made it an important economic engine for commerce between the mid-Atlantic and the Mississippi River Basin running south to the Gulf of Mexico.

and a bustling city of 100,000 by 1850.⁵⁰ As the social and economic lines between north and south emerged over the decades, Cincinnati represented an interesting if fraught cultural stew of regional attitudes.

Apart from whatever skills the settlers had brought themselves on their fiddles and German flutes, it is not surprising that the local military stationed at Fort Washington and their field music would have provided the most visible musical talent in the town, and likely the most commonly heard. Their drums and fifes marking drills and other regular points of the day would have been a familiar, clearly audible, and undoubtedly welcome sound.⁵¹ There was also a military band at the fort, what was typically called a “band of music.” Brought by the British military to the North American colonies and the ancestor of today’s marching and military bands, the basic form of the band of music at the turn of the nineteenth century was pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and valveless French horns.⁵² Together with the field music of fife and drum, it made the military a colorful and flexible musical institution. Fort Washington’s band was in evidence at Fourth of July celebrations: in 1799 they “made the woods resound” with “martial music.” Their repertoire at an Independence Day celebration several years later included “The President’s March,” “French Grenadiers’ March,” “Washington’s March,” and a number of other popular songs, including “Anacreon in Heaven.” The band could, it seems, perform more sophisticated music as well; it contained “a number of French- and

⁵⁰ Glazer, *Cincinnati in 1840*, 7 and Introduction *passim*, 31-34; Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788-1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Charles Theodore Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1904); *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio: their past and present, including biographies and portraits of pioneers and representative citizens, etc.*, (Cincinnati: S.B. Nelson, 1894).

⁵¹ See Chapter One, 23-24.

⁵² Harry R. Stevens, “Adventures In Refinement: Early Concert Life in Cincinnati, 1810-1826,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 5 (September 1947): 8; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 272-274.

German-born musicians, who performed pieces by Gluck and Haydn on a river excursion.” Even early in the century, barely more than a decade after Cincinnati’s founding, several trained musicians were available to the military band to perform complex instrumental pieces.⁵³

The band’s repertoire of popular songs and patriotic music suggests the rapid oral and print transmission of music, even at this early date, and the ready familiarity of audiences with well-known patriotic tunes even in then-remote parts of the country. Their performance of “Anacreon in Heaven,” probably in 1801, occurred at roughly the same time that the young Francis Scott Key was setting his lyric “When the Warrior Returns” to the same song, which he would later use for “The Star Spangled Banner.” “The President’s March” performed at the Ohio River outpost around the turn of the century had already by that time become familiar as the tune for “Hail, Columbia.” All of these pieces demonstrate the use of patriotic music beyond the two or three best-known pieces (like “Yankee Doodle” or “Hail, Columbia”) to situate local celebrations in a larger national picture. “Washington’s March,” for example, was likely one of two different compositions with that name that were especially popular in the 1790s and early 1800s and remained in the patriotic repertoire at least until the Civil War. Both were grand marches ideal in tempo and atmosphere for public band performance even by amateurs, designed to be played at stately tempos by available instruments; one New York music printer even issued them in one sheet with repeats indicated for each section and stripped-down, easy-to-follow notation. Popular music, including patriotic song, was transmitted orally and in print from eastern centers to still-remote nodes like Cincinnati, where local

⁵³ William Osborne, *Music in Ohio* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004), 19; Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, 364-365.

performance helped cement the musical practices and symbols associated with it into a broader consciousness.⁵⁴

The town did not take long to inaugurate theatrical entertainments, conscripting amateurs, professional artists (although again, the distinction between those categories was not always clear), and willing members of the local militia. They also used, as did traveling performers, any available space. The first recorded play in Cincinnati was performed in September, 1801, with soldiers taking most of the parts, in a “rude building in the artificers’ yard on the plain below Fort Washington.” The play was the *The Poor Soldier*, with music composed by the Englishman William Shield, who had given the music an Irish flavor to capitalize on the vogue for Irish ballads. This ad hoc production included a new song written for the occasion, and the local press lauded the music for the “masterly way” it was performed. *The Poor Soldier* was a comic opera, but with martial sentiments: one song began, “The drum is his glory, his joy and delight; / It leads him to pleasure as well as to fight.” Such an attitude seemed appropriate for the martial setting: performed by soldiers in the yard of a frontier fort.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ While undated, this publication appears to have been printed sometime between 1823 and 1826. See “Washington’s Grand March,” New York, Levy Collection Box 3, Item 133; Ken Emerson, *Doo-dah!*, 143-144; David B. Thompson, “Confederates at the Keyboard: Southern Piano Music During the Civil War,” in Mark A. Snell, Bruce C. Kelley, eds., *Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 114-115; John Tasker Howard, *The Music of George Washington’s Time* (Washington, D.C.: United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, 1931). On song transmission, see Spitzer, “‘Oh! Susanna’”: 90-136.

⁵⁵ Charles O’Keefe, *The Poor Soldier: A Comic Opera* (Dublin: Richard Grace, 1824). Most theatricals in America were still of British origin. The first successful professionally produced play by an American citizen was Royall Tyler’s *The Contrast*, premiered in 1787. See Cynthia A. Kierner, *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Linda Troost, “Shield, William,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25638>; Cynthia Adams Hoover, “Music in Eighteenth-Century American Theater,” *American Music* 2, no. 4 (Winter, 1984): 15; *The Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. XCIX (Jan.-Jun. 1829): 376-377; On the Fort Washington performance, see Ophia D. Smith, “The Early Theater of Cincinnati,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 13, no. 4 (October 1955): 231-232.

Venues for music performance came and went, dependent on the taste of the community and on groups of dedicated amateurs. Actors, performers, and impresarios continued to extend and intertwine performative networks across the country. In the teens and twenties, this process accelerated west of the Alleghenies. As performers arrived, moved on, and sometimes remained, some spaces for music started to become more permanent, gaining community acceptance. In the first three decades after its founding, Cincinnatians eagerly played music in single performances like the military's show in 1801, and founded associations like the Harmonical Society and the Thespian Corps who built the Shellbark Theatre in 1814, so called because the rough bark of its building material faced the outside.⁵⁶ The city's musical culture was slowly moving toward permanence.

Theaters, with their emphasis on popular, commercial entertainment, were highly visible symbols of community permanence, solidity, and culture in growing towns and cities. Many Cincinnatians, however, still construed commercial theatre as morally harmful. Dr. Daniel Drake, Cincinnati's most prominent civic voice in the early decades of the century, chronicled this viewpoint sympathetically:

We have as yet no epidemic amusements among us....a society of young townsmen [the Thespian Corps] have lately erected a temporary wooden playhouse [the Shellbark]....the tendency of their institution to encourage *strollers* and engross time, has been deprecated by the more religious portion of our citizens...⁵⁷

A leading local churchman, Joshua L. Wilson of the First Presbyterian Church, led a public charge against the building of a new theater in early 1815, but despite lingering

⁵⁶ Ophia D. Smith, "The Early Theatre of Cincinnati," 240-242. The Harmonical Society provided music for at least one play at the new theater (see *Liberty Hall* (Cincinnati), March 18, 1815).

⁵⁷ Daniel Drake, *Natural and Statistical View, or Picture of Cincinnati and the Miami Country* (Cincinnati: Looker and Wallace, 1815), 167-68, italics in original. See also Ophia D. Smith "Early Theater of Cincinnati," 234-236; Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, 468.

moral concerns, entertainments both theatrical and musical continued. One local wit offered a Fourth of July toast: “The Cincinnati Theatre – may it not, like the walls of Jericho, fall at the sound of Joshua’s Horn.”⁵⁸

Suspensions regarding morality did not stop theaters from becoming permanent and more opulent over time, in Cincinnati as elsewhere. The Shellbark, as impermanent as its construction implied, burned not long after it was opened. The Columbia Street Theatre (sometimes called the Cincinnati Theatre or the Globe) replaced it in 1819, one of six theaters designed to be permanent cultural anchors built in Cincinnati before the Civil War. The Columbia Street Theatre, considered sumptuous when built, was supplanted by the Third Street Theatre in 1832, described in a letter after its Fourth of July opening penned by Isaac Jewett, a young businessman: “Its interior is elegantly, chastely finished...the company [i.e. the performers] superior....taste is however gradually ‘being created.’”⁵⁹ Refined behavior and artistic taste, it was thought, went along with permanence and elegant fittings. Still, constructed as it was of wood, like most American theaters its permanence was relative: both the Columbia Street and Third Street Theatres burned to the ground two years after Jewett wrote his fulsome letter.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Charles Frederic Goss, *Cincinnati, The Queen City; 1788-1912* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1912), 447.

⁵⁹ Isaac Appleton Jewett Letters, 1831-1834, MssVF 2477, Cincinnati History Library and Archives. Descriptions of the Columbia Street Theatre emphasized its lavish character: it “had a pit and tiers of boxes, gallery, lobbies, a punch room, and could accommodate eight hundred people. In front was an Ionic portico....There was also a chandelier of lamps....There was a green drop-curtain with the motto, “To Hold, as ‘Twere, The Mirror Up to Nature.”” Quote from Goss, *Cincinnati, The Queen City*, 448; see also Francis Courtney Wemyss, *Wemyss’ Chronology of the American Stage, from 1752 to 1852* (New York: Taylor, 1852), 177-178; Harry R. Stevens Collection, Mss 755, Box 48, Cincinnati History Society Library.

⁶⁰ The National Theatre was built three years later, in 1837, and is the first Cincinnati theater for which an extant visual record exists. See Ophia D. Smith, “The Cincinnati Theater (1817-1830),” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 14, no. 4 (October, 1956): 254-256; Charles F. Goss, *Cincinnati: The Queen City, vol. I* (Chicago, 1912), 446-450; “The Old National Theatre,” n.d., Paul F. Bien Postcard Collection, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

Cincinnatians wasted little time in organizing temporary locations for patriotic performance. The first “concert” recorded in the town was in 1810 at the Court House at the corner of Main and Fifth Streets, and featured a “brass band whose members played for their own diversion and occasional public entertainment.”⁶¹ They advertised the concert for its civic utility as a “laudable undertaking to instruct the youth of our community, in the elegant and refined science of Music.”⁶² An 1813 concert by a Mr. Webster, who had performed for at least six years in Philadelphia and New York, was also in an improvised space: held at the Assembly Room of the Columbian Inn, the concert featured a variety of popular airs, many of them following the vogue for “Irish” music made newly popular by the recent publication of Thomas Moore’s Irish ballads.⁶³ “Kathleen McChree,” also called “The Rangers’ Quick Step,” combined an Irish title with a military genre: it was a simple, fast-paced march in loose, swinging compound duple time.⁶⁴ He also sang the popular “Post Captain,” by the same William Shield who composed the score for *The Poor Soldier*. Like the latter piece, “Post Captain” embedded patriotic themes in the martial narrative of its titular captain (“with ardent zeal his youthfull heart / Swell[‘]d high for Naval Glory”).⁶⁵ Webster distributed handbills with lyrics on the night of the concert. He was also a sheet music salesman who advertised “a

⁶¹ Stevens, “Adventures in Refinement,” 8-9.

⁶² *Cincinnati Whig*, April 25, 1810.

⁶³ The popularity of “Irish”-themed popular song had been greatly fueled by the publication of Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, the first volume of which appeared in 1808. Moore’s Irish ballads were hugely popular throughout the nineteenth century; some are still well known and loved today. See Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 42-61; Herbert G. Eldridge, “The American Republication of Thomas Moore’s ‘Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems’: An Early Version of the Reprinting ‘Game,’” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 62, no. 2 (1968): 199-205.

⁶⁴ “Kathleen McChree, or the Rangers Quick Step,” (New York, n.d.) Levy Collection, Box 160, Item 148. See also Justin London. “Metre.” *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18519>.

⁶⁵ “The Post Captain,” (New York, n.d.),)Levy Collection, JHU, Box 31, Item 170; “Review of New Musical Publications,” *The Monthly Magazine*, London, 14 2 (September 1, 1802), 168.

quantity of Music (particularly songs) all arrayed for the Piano Forte to be disposed of, which will be highly advantageous to Ladies who play that instrument.”⁶⁶ Performances such as these provided outlets for the dissemination of patriotic music as well as initiating the cultural reputation that would later transform this straight-laced, commercial community into the so-called Queen City.⁶⁷

Cincinnatians, like most Americans, readily employed outdoor, public spaces for national celebrations, thereby further diffusing the familiar aural patterns of patriotic musical performance. Local newspapers described the sounds of celebration of the 1815 peace: the “platoon firing,” “martial music,” and “hearty cheers.”⁶⁸ Later that year, July Fourth festivities in nearby Ross and Morgan townships were marked by “discharges of small arms” and “martial music.”⁶⁹ In Cincinnati itself, the holiday elicited an evocative narrative from the local reporter similar to the newspaper description of the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania July Fourth celebration that year, including details of the procession to an outdoor “arbor.” This observer noted the sounds of the day in especially vivid language:

At the early dawn of day, the loud toned heralds of war awakened the citizens from their slumbers – It was delightful to hear the vibrating sounds of the cannons [*sic*]

⁶⁶ *Western Spy* (Cincinnati), October 25, 1813; Stevens, “Adventures in Refinement,” 9-10; *Harry R. Stevens Collection*, Mss 775, Box 48, Cincinnati History Library and Archives.

⁶⁷ Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati, Queen City of the West, 1819-1838* (Columbus, Oh., 1992), 228-230. Outside observers sometimes criticized what they saw as Cincinnati’s all-consuming penchant for business at the expense of culture. The best-known example was Francis Trollope’s denunciation: “I never saw any people who appeared to live so much without amusement as the Cincinnatians....They have no public balls, excepting, I think, six during the Christmas holidays. They have no concerts. They have no dinner parties.” At the same time, Trollope herself was financing the construction of a multi-use cultural space, later called the Bazaar. See Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, John Lauritz Larson, ed. (New York: Reprint Services, 1993), 43; Ophia D. Smith, “The Cincinnati Theater, 1817-1830,” 279-281; Tamara S. Wagner, “‘Did you ever hear of such a thing as Settlements?’: Settling Outstanding Accounts in Francis Trollope’s American Novels,” in Tamara S. Wagner ed., *Francis Trollope: Beyond “Domestic Manners”* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 85.

⁶⁸ *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, March 18, 1815.

⁶⁹ *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, July 24, 1815.

roar, bounding o'er the Ohio, and adjacent highlands, and trembling and dying in the distant valleys....⁷⁰

After the procession moved to a church, the “new Baptist Meeting-House,” more music followed: “two occasional Odes were sung by a band of Choristers, and the exercises closed by them with a national song.”⁷¹

Even as they built permanent theaters, Cincinnatians continued to celebrate patriotic events in public locales, and as the city's built environment matured, patriotic music served as a link between civic and commercial space. The 1819 season at the Shellbark featured a theatrical version of Andrew Jackson's triumph at New Orleans, ending “with a large transparent eagle, emblazoned with the motto ‘The Hero of New Orleans,’ descending onto the head of General Jackson.” (Although not extant, the program undoubtedly contained patriotic music as well).⁷² The day after the July Fourth celebration in 1830, the Columbia Street Theatre advertised patriotic songs in between performances of *Joan of Arc* and *Rip Van Winkle*: the songs were “Huzza, Here's Columbia Forever!” and “Hurra for the Red, White, and Blue.”⁷³ The same paper printed a July Fourth poem, perhaps recited in the previous day's ceremonies, centered on music: “Ye brazen trumpets ope your throats! / Sound earth's artillery. / Let martial music fill the air...”⁷⁴ Performances in commercial spaces like the Columbia Street Theatre or the Bazaar and the civic space of streets or City Hall intermingled in a mutually reinforcing spatial web, prompting similar musical outbursts of patriotism in different places.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, July 10, 1815.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Vitz, *Queen and the Arts*, 10.

⁷³ *Cincinnati Gazette*, July 5, 1830.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ See *Cincinnati Gazette*, July 3, 1830 for July Fourth ball at the Bazaar; the City Hall celebration of the Franklin Typographical Society is described in the July 8th issue.

Music teachers took part in the dissemination of patriotic music as well. Usually operating individually, music teachers were an integral part of the spatial web of the musical community. Teachers could be local citizens and also peripatetic travelers like Sol Smith, who led singing schools at a local church and at the courthouse in Covington, Kentucky, just across the river, during 1819. Apart from education, their schools also served as concert halls, piano showrooms, and stores for printed music and other supplies.⁷⁶ William Nixon, proprietor of “Mr. & Mrs. Nixon’s Logierian Musical Seminary,” on the corner of Main and Fourth Streets in downtown Cincinnati (Nixon also lived there), took part in all of these activities.⁷⁷ He also published a piano instruction book in 1834 in which he observed that “the martial strain...is an engine to propel to battle.”⁷⁸ Even stores selling a wide variety of printed matter advertised martial music, like the book store of Ferguson & Sanxay, which sold musical instruments along with a “selection of Military Marches.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Osborne, *Music in Ohio*, 34-39; Keene, *History of Music Education*, chapters 1-8; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 77-78, 146-149, 445.

⁷⁷ A representative sample drawn from two weeks of Cincinnati’s newspaper in January 1832 includes, besides Nixon’s Seminary, “musical instruction” from recently-arrived Baltimore transplant William Harman, who trumpeted his musical experience in the Monumental City; a “Female academy,” the “Academy of Messrs. Loreilke & Pommayrac (both from France) for the tuition of the French Language, Piano Forte, Guitar, Singing, Drawing, and Painting;” the “female boarding school” of a Mrs. Wood, who along with her daughter gave “instruction on the Piano Forte and in Vocal Music;” and the “Cincinnati Musical Academy” of William Nash, sometime partner and competitor of Nixon, who gave a detailed weekly list of instruction sessions in various musical disciplines. See ads for Nixon’s school in, for example, *Cincinnati Chronicle and Literary Gazette*, January 7, 14, 1832; *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, March 7, 1833. See *Cincinnati Chronicle and Literary Gazette*, January 7, 14, 1832; *The Cincinnati Directory for the Year 1831* (Cincinnati: Robinson & Fairbank, 1831), Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton Country, 117.

⁷⁸ William Nixon, *A Guide to Instruction on the Piano-Forte; Designed for the Use of Both Parents and Pupils; In a Series of Short Essays, Dedicated to the Young Ladies of the Musical Seminary* (Cincinnati: Josiah Drake, 1834); Harry R. Stevens Notes, Mss 755, Box 48; see also William Nixon, “Address On the History and Moral Influence of Music,” *Transactions of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Western Literary Institute* (Cincinnati: Josiah Drake, 1835), 227-253.

⁷⁹ *The Inquisitor, and Cincinnati Advertiser*, July 28, 1818.

There was a market for instruction in martial music as well. One P. Ratel, advertising his school in 1820, showed off his catholic skills, claiming mastery on “the following instruments, viz. The Clarionet, the Flute, Bassoon, French-Horn, Flageolet, Violin, and Piano-Forte.” A James H. Hoffman offered lessons in martial music in 1815, advertising a money-back guarantee if he failed to teach the pupil at least thirteen tunes in eighteen lessons on an exhaustive list of instruments including, among many others, the trumpet, bugle, trombone, fife, serpent, bass drum, and cymbals – all military instruments. In case his meaning was not evident, he advertised “MILITARY BANDS taught accurately and expeditiously, on a correct scale, on any of the above instruments, with appropriate music.” Hoffman’s list reveals the broad variety of instruments used in martial music at the time, in addition to the typical primitive brass and percussion instruments one might expect.⁸⁰

Band instruments turned the city’s streets into patriotic performance spaces. In 1825, Cincinnati hosted the Marquis de Lafayette for two days during his triumphal American tour. Artillery fire and music punctuated Lafayette’s arrival, with a band playing “Hail to the Chief.” “The effect was electric,” reported one local paper; “we believe there was not a heart among the ten thousand spectators who crowded our streets...that did not beat with the most delightful emotions.”⁸¹ The whirlwind of celebratory events (including a Masonic dinner and a fireworks display at the Vauxhall Gardens) culminated in a “general procession.” Organizers, led by General William Henry Harrison, advertised the event in advance as broadly civic, making a point to

⁸⁰ *Liberty Hall & Cincinnati Gazette*, December 18, 1815; September 14, 1819. Music stores and instructors across the country made it a point to advertise lessons for military musicians and stocks of band instruments. See for example *Baltimore Gazette*, September 5, 1833 and December 30, 1835; *New York Public Advertiser*, August 12, September 28, 1808; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 4, 1816, among others.

⁸¹ *Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, May 21, 1825 (reprinted from the *Cincinnati National Crisis*).

include “citizens” among the militia companies, mechanic societies, bands of music, and other groups that made up the procession. The press particularly noted the “gratitude and patriotism” of the mechanic societies.⁸² Lafayette’s visit, in short, prompted displays of the patriotic sublime.

It was also a chance for boosters to showcase the rapidly growing city. The built environment through which the parade route traveled must have highlighted its bustle. Starting in the vacant lots behind the courthouse, where the committee had erected a temporary pavilion for Lafayette’s address, it passed from the unfinished northern half of the city to its commercial hub on Front Street, adjacent to the public landing on the Ohio (see Figure 2.2).⁸³ An ode written by a “young lady of Cincinnati” seemed to put the spatial element of Lafayette’s visit into words: the “joyous” crowds “all thronging where thy pathway lies / With swelling hearts, and tearful eyes....Now loud the strain of triumph swell.”⁸⁴ The poet’s cognizance of the sound of patriotism echoed the central role of music in public processions.

The malleability of performance spaces meant that within three decades of existence, the citizens of Cincinnati could comfortably make use of both public and semi-private spaces for their patriotic needs, as the reception of Andrew Jackson in 1830 shows. Jackson passed through Cincinnati on an unofficial visit for one day at the end of

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, May 14, 25, 1825.

⁸⁴ “To Lafayette,” *Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, May 28, 1825.

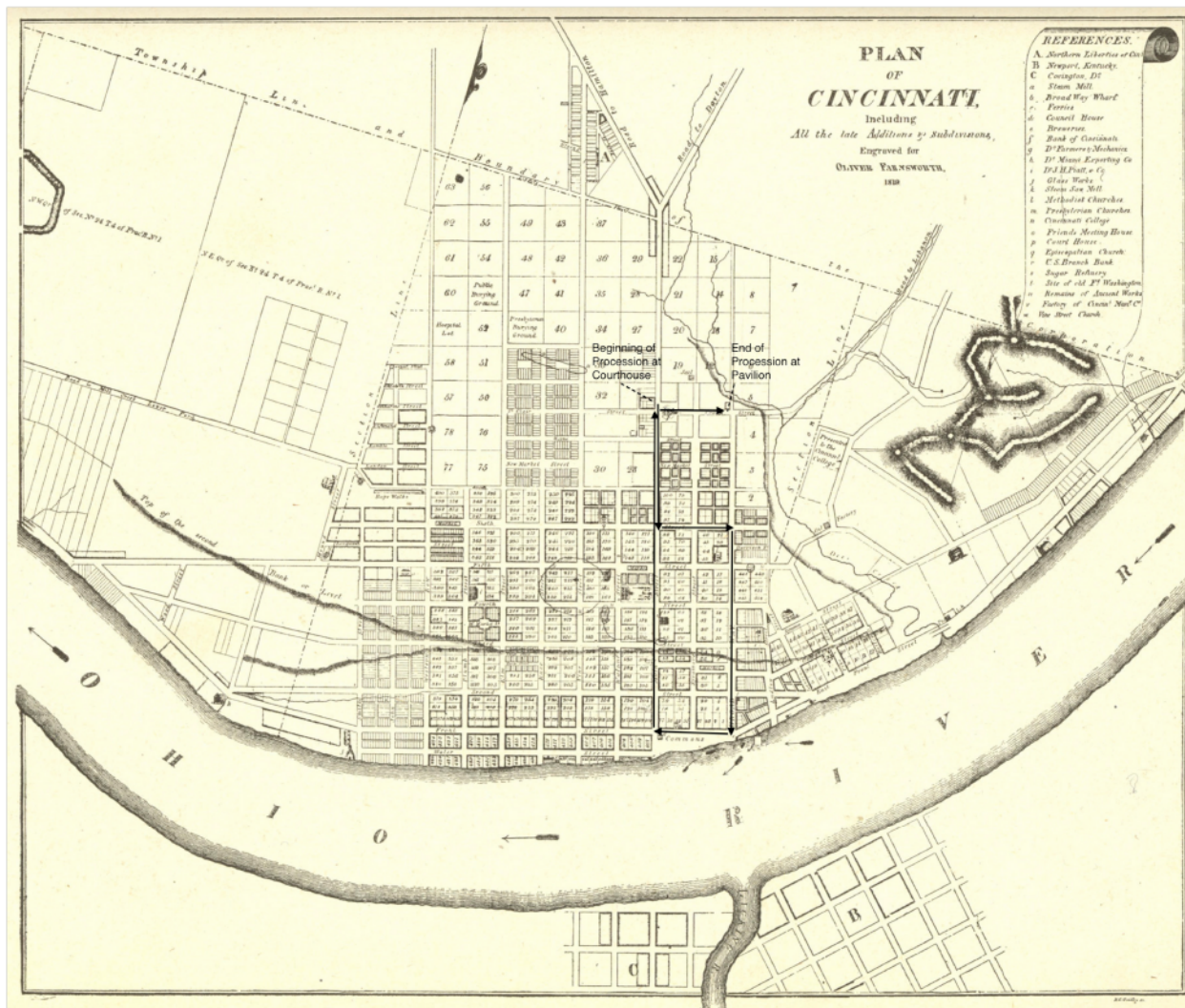


Figure 2.2. Map of Cincinnati, 1819, With Parade Route (from Charles Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*). Cincinnati Historical Maps, Archives and Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati. The line traces the route of the Lafayette Procession in 1825

June, soon after the Maysville Road Veto in May. That controversial decision still sparked partisan fireworks and Jackson's reception was mixed, but his supporters were still able to arrange a patriotic reception on short notice. According to the Cincinnati *Daily Republican*, a Jacksonian paper, the President's arrival on the Public Landing

was a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe. A short distance above the town the escorting party were met by the steamer Clinton, with another band of music [the President's boat had a band of nine local volunteers already on board]: the three boats were lashed together and the musicians united in performing national airs. Salutes were fired from several steamers at the shore, & from other positions, which were returned by the Atalanta and the Clinton – The President standing uncovered on the top of the former, bowing to the applauding multitudes which thronged the shore and the windows of the houses along the whole front of the city.¹

As per usual, patriotic music was front and center in this celebration. It is notable that Cincinnati could so readily provide not one but two bands, both sufficiently expert to be able to combine forces for an impromptu joint performance. The tunes played by the combined bands were not named, nor did they need to be: the reporter could assume his readers understood what that meant. "National airs" were common knowledge and, along with the patriotic practices of cannon fire, cheering, fireworks displays, and nationalist imagery, had a robust network of performative spaces to thank for this familiarity. The rote formulas nestled in the description of Jackson's arrival—"a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe," for example—were equally a familiar part of descriptions of non-partisan civic events. Like John Durang's, these encomiums signaled patriotic affect.

The rhetoric of unity and emotional transport could also be mocked. The *Cincinnati Gazette*, a rival Whig paper, did just that after the President departed: "There was much more éclat in the departure, than in the reception. There was more military show, more powder burnt, more of 'a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe.'

¹ *Cincinnati Daily Republican*, June 29, 1830.

We wait therefore, for an official description, which we shall use according to our own discretion.”² Descriptions of spectacles that exceeded words appeared repeatedly, as did phrases like “applauding multitudes.” The *Gazette* itself deployed such tropes: the same week as the President’s visit, its observer described without irony “emotions that are easier felt than [*sic*] described” in a report of a common school procession, complete with a band of music.³ The report continued that “we could not but wish there might be a future President among them [and] that he might never exercise his veto at the expense of Internal Improvement.”⁴ This political jab shows that patriotic tropes could be yoked to partisan bickering, even as they tracked the language of communal sentiment.

The course of Cincinnati’s early history as a musical city shows the entanglement of patriotic music and its accompanying visual symbols with the development and elaboration of a wide variety of places for performance, some of them becoming permanent, others thrown together for particular occasions. Musicians like William Nixon who lived in Cincinnati for years, and transient performers like Noah Ludlow or Sol Smith, anchored the local performative network and connected it to a broader one. For these performers, patriotic music was a familiar cultural product whose use tied together local theaters, homes, churches, streets, and parks like it did in the longer-settled cities and towns on the East Coast. Tracing the network back toward the East, we find another city whose longer history lent a sense of permanence to some of its artistic institutions, even as their flexibility and provisionality persisted.

² *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 30, 1830.

³ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 29, 1830. Cincinnati had moved forward relatively early with plans for widespread education; the common schools were privately funded institutions dating from the mid-1820s. See Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, 617-618; Keene, *History of Music Education*, 166-171.

⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 29, 1830.

Baltimore: The Spectacle of Patriotic Performance

In 1790, when Cincinnati was a frontier fort and a handful of houses huddled again the Ohio River, Baltimore was the fourth largest city in the United States, a mercantile port with strong ties to Europe and the Caribbean and by river and road to its hinterlands and the western territories. The Monumental City was more populous in 1790 than Cincinnati in 1820, yet the booming western city had caught up to its eastern counterpart by the middle of the nineteenth century, both having populations hovering around 100,000 by 1850.⁵ In terms of its expressive culture, however, Baltimore's head start was significant. When Cincinnati built its first named theater, the Shellbark, Baltimore had enjoyed performances in permanent, purpose-built theaters for more than thirty years. Its first brick theater structure had been built in 1781 and its principal theater, the Holliday Street Theatre, had been in place since 1794 (although newly and sumptuously rebuilt in the same location in 1813), and the city would soon boast several more. These theaters were used by local performers and also by the established, experienced theatrical troupes of the east. The city's physical location, as a convenient port for immigrant European artists, also influenced its music. Like Philadelphia and New York, Baltimore was an origin point from which performances spread west, and the Holliday Street Theatre was preeminent among Baltimore's many performative spaces.⁶

⁵ Rockman, *Scraping By*, 28; Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation*, 3-4.

⁶ The original Holliday Street Theatre was begun in 1794 and completed in 1795; the wooden structure was torn down and a new brick theater built on the same site, opening in 1813. Various called the Holliday Street Theatre, the New Theatre (in fact the third theater to be referred to as the "New Theatre"), the Baltimore Theatre, and Old Drury, the structure operated as a theater into the 1870s (when it was partly destroyed by fire), making it one of the longest-lasting in the nation. It was finally torn down in 1917. Other important antebellum performance spaces included the Front Street Theatre and Circus (Jenny Lind's Baltimore performances took place there in the 1850s), the Adelphi Theatre (commonly known as the Mud Theatre for its low-lying site), the Roman Amphitheatre, the Howard Athenaeum, and the Old Baltimore Museum. As in New York and Philadelphia, John Bill Ricketts built a short-lived circus in Baltimore in the 1790s. See Clayton Coleman Hall, ed., *Baltimore: Its History and Its People* (New York, 1912), 652-653;

Theatrical performances, including patriotic ones, relied on spectacle. Baltimore's theatre scene was no exception. Theatrical spectacles, using fantastical sets (sometimes of exotic locales), and elaborate special effects appealing to both the eyes and the ears, were an accompaniment of the melodramas that were so popular in early national theatre. In Baltimore, theaters programmed pieces like "Cherry and Fair Star," advertised as a "Grand Eastern Spectacle;" "Lady of the Lake," based on Walter Scott's poem; and the bizarre "The Gnome-King," a spectacle play based on German myths whose author actually criticized "mere '*vehicles*' for Musick and *Spectacle*" even as he added to the genre.⁷ During the War of 1812 and for decades afterwards, the vogue for spectacle made the staging of grand martial scenes an attractive option for theater managers: theatrical spectacles were excellent occasions for the enactment of the patriotic sublime.

Permanent venues like the Holliday Street Theatre enabled the spectacle plays characteristic of the post- 1812 Baltimore stage, but earlier Baltimore performers employed temporary venues. For example, a 1797 performance in "Aaron Barling's Oyster house and Tavern" took place next door to the then-new Holliday Street Theatre and featured "a Medley of Entertainments, Pleasing Deceptions, and Balancing, and the Babes in the Woods by Automatons four feet high."⁸ Even the most specialized artists had multiple roles. For example, Alexander Reinagle, well-known musician and

J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County from the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of the Representative Men* (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971 [1881]), 678-695; David Ritchey, ed., *A Guide to the Baltimore Stage in the Eighteenth Century*, 3-52.

⁷ George Colman, *The Gnome-King, or, the Giant-Mountains* (London: John Miller, 1819); italics in original. Genre terminology was much less precise in antebellum America than today, so that the category of spectacle play could easily encompass opera as well. It is important to note that virtually all such plays contained music. We would today call them opera, operetta, or musical theater. On theatrical spectacle, see Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 76-84; Lewis, ed., *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville*, introduction; Barry Witham, ed., *Theatre in the United States: Volume 1, 1750-1915: Theatre in the Colonies and United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124-133, 148-168.

⁸ *May's Dramatic Encyclopedia*, MS 995, Roll 1, Jacket 3, Part 6, S26, Maryland Historical Society.

composer, was not only the co-manager of the prominent theatrical troupe of Reinagle and Wignell in Philadelphia and Baltimore, but also doubled as scenic painter for the troupe.

Reinagle's career reveals how composing as well as playing patriotic music was a matter of course for performers. Reinagle wrote a number of patriotic tunes, including "Madison's March," "Mrs. Madison's Minuet," and "The Tars of Columbia" celebrating the naval heroes of the First Barbary War, as well as a piece for a Baltimore militia company, "First Baltimore Hussars."⁹ He also mounted expensive musical productions. William Wood, a member and later manager of the same company, actually criticized Reinagle for spending too much money on music. His complaint bears out how elaborate these musical accompaniments were:

The musical part of the entertainment being now made so prominent, greatly swelled the expenditures. These included the enormous charge of a perfect orchestra of instrumental performers of undoubted abilities....The musical instruments of all kinds...including two grand pianos and a noble organ, swelled this sum yet more. Then again the skeleton of a chorus, to be constantly kept and filled up as wanted, formed another item.¹⁰

Reinagle was interested in the aural spectacle that a large orchestra could provide and chafed at the financial constraints. His efforts anticipated the much larger orchestras of the mid-nineteenth century and later. At the turn of the century most audiences had to be satisfied with smaller forces like the Old American Company's eight-person orchestra.

Spectacle performances at the Holliday Street Theatre during the War of 1812 and afterwards vividly brought the patriotic sublime into the theatre. The Holliday Street

⁹ "First Baltimore Hussars," (Baltimore, n.d.), Levy Collection, Box 38, Item 54; "Madison's March," (Philadelphia, n.d.), Box 3, Item 74, Levy Collection; "The Tars of Columbia," (Baltimore, n.d.), Box 85, Item 75, Levy Collection.

¹⁰ William Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage*, 92-93; see also Downer ed., *Memoir of John Durang*, 20-21, 112.

Theatre seated more than 1,500 spectators and was “tastefully decorated,” boasting “all the complicated fixtures and machinery of scenic display.”¹¹ The string of American naval victories in 1813 on Lake Erie and in the Atlantic prompted a series of spectacles at the theater. On May 12, for example, the resident company¹² premiered a new show called “The Constitution and Wasp; or, American Tars Triumphant.” This show also featured premieres of two new patriotic songs: “American Chronology” and “The Pride of Columbia,” sung by Mr. Hardinge, who later premiered “The Star Spangled Banner” at the Holliday Street Theatre.¹³

Five months later, the theater celebrated Commodore Perry’s Lake Erie victory with “Heroes of the Lakes,” another new patriotic opera, as well a “Grand National Transparency” featuring the sort of rich visual detail the lyric to “The Star Spangled Banner” would soon invoke:

The Genius of America is seen seated on a rock, upon the borders of the lake, presenting to an infant figure of fame (illustrative of the growing splendor of our naval band) a portrait of the youthful hero Commodore Perry. In the perspective, a distant view of the enemy’s captured fleet, and the moment of its being taken possession by its valiant conquerors, and surmounted by our national flag...¹⁴

This performance also connected the indoor space of the theater with the street outside:

“For this night only,” as the advertisement said, “the front of the theatre will be fancifully

¹¹ John H.B. Latrobe, *Picture of Baltimore, Containing a Description of all Objects of Interest in the City; and Embellished with Views of the Principal Public Buildings* (Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1832), 189; Jonathan B. Jeffery, *Jno. B. Jeffery’s Guide and Directory to the Opera Houses, Theatres, Public Halls, Bill Posters, etc. of the Cities and Towns of America* (Chicago, 1889), 136.

¹² This was the former company of Thomas Wignell and Alexander Reinagle, by this point managed by William B. Wood and William Warren: it was the dominant theatrical company in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Annapolis. See Wood, *Personal Recollections*, 182-215.

¹³ Playbill, “First Commemoration of Naval Victories,” for the Holliday Street Theatre, May 12 1813, Ephemera Collection, Series W, Box 40, Maryland Historical Society.

¹⁴ Two weeks later, the theater presented a second “National Scene” depicting the Lake Erie victory. The performance featured a “Naval Triple Hornpipe” by John Durang’s two sons, Charles and Ferdinand Durang, who had joined the military in Baltimore. See Holliday Street Theatre playbills, October 1 and October 23, 1813, Ephemera Collection, Series W, Box 40, MdHS.

illuminated and ornamented in honor of the victory, with transparencies and naval emblems.” The colorful display, making the theater’s façade part of the patriotic occasion, turned even passersby into an audience.

Warren and Wood used the concatenation of music with various spectacular visual and aural effects to reinforce the sublimity portrayed by “The Star Spangled Banner” itself. On November 12, two months after the British were beaten back from the city and less than one month after Key’s “Star Spangled Banner” was performed for the first time, the troupe unveiled an “ENTIRE NEW SCENE” they had been teasing in playbills for more than a month – a depiction of the bombardment of Fort McHenry. The eyewitness’s point of view was “taken from Hamstead Hill” and the description seems remarkably similar to the famous print of the battle produced around the same time (see Figure 4).¹⁵ Theatrical spectacle created a vivid and lifelike scene: the fort was “illuminated by the fire from the Enemy’s Bomb Vessels; Which discharge a rapid succession of SHELLS, (accurately represented by machinery); some bursting in the air, &c.”¹⁶ The effect of this scene as advertised was visual and aural: audience members could even smell the powder used for the replicated explosions.

Spectacle also informed civic nationalist performance in urban parades, and in the streets the force of music was especially evident. One link between theatrical spectacle and the civic space of the street was the circus. In 1837, the circus spilled into the streets of Baltimore with the arrival of Purdy, Welch, Macomber & Co.’s “stupendous

¹⁵ See Chapter One, Figure 4. There does not seem to be a firm date for this lithograph, produced by one J. Bower in Philadelphia; it could have been produced anytime between 1814 and 1816. It is in fact entirely possible that it post-dates the November 12 Baltimore performance, in which case it may have been based on the theatrical scene.

¹⁶ Playbill, Baltimore Theatre, November 12, 1814, Uncatalogued Hambleton Theatrical Collection, Box 3, Series W, W41, Maryland Historical Society.

Menagerie.”¹⁷ Baltimore was part of the New York-based group’s tour of cities and small towns, including Philadelphia, Buffalo, Ithaca, Waterford, Schenectady, and Troy, New York. It was accompanied by the most famous brass band in America, Edward “Ned” Kendall’s Boston Brass Band.¹⁸ “Anxious spectators” crowded the parade route starting on Pratt Street near Eutaw Street in Baltimore; the “majestic elephant Tippu Sultan” led the procession, followed by the band on “beautiful grey horses.”¹⁹ The spectacle of the menagerie was “beautiful, wonderful and sublime” and the brass band was not least of the attractions: “the concentration of musical talent is alone worth the price of admission.”²⁰

“Theatre” and “circus” were sometimes so close as to be interchangeable, as with Baltimore’s Front Street Theatre and Circus. It programmed many of the same kinds of plays as the Holliday Street Theatre, in addition to fare as varied as displays of horsemanship and Jenny Lind’s first Baltimore performances during her 1850 American tour.²¹ But outside, when on parade, the menagerie could take full advantage of band music. The Boston Brass Band represented the martial and patriotic element of the spectacle, both in its military uniforms and bearing, and the music it performed, which included martial marches and quicksteps. Like theaters that incorporated patriotic music

¹⁷ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, September 27, 1837.

¹⁸ See *Evening Journal* (Albany, NY), May 15, 1837; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 16, 1837; Kotar and Gessler, *Rise of the American Circus*, 112-113.

¹⁹ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, September 27 and 28, 1837. In at least one city, some of the band members had apparently ridden in a “howdah” – a sort of pavilion – on the elephant’s back. See *Ithaca* (NY) *Herald*, September 9, 1837.

²⁰ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, September 30, 1837.

²¹ Greve, *Baltimore City and County*, 689-690; Charles G. Rosenberg, *Jenny Lind in America* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1851), 83-84.

and visuals into their regular round of performances, the menagerie wove these martial signifiers into a public parade that was not part of a specific patriotic memorialization.²²

As in Cincinnati during Lafayette's 1825 visit, parades turned Baltimore's street system into a vast space for patriotic display. Parades ran the gamut from militia drills and parades announced on short notice, to events like the Purdy menagerie's parade, to community-wide parades on national days of celebration or mourning. By the 1820s, as befitted the so-called Monumental City, Baltimore's streets were marked by the Washington Monument (begun in 1815 and completed in 1829), and the Battle Monument, commemorating the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812, begun in 1815. During the celebration of Defender's Day in 1822 (the date of the defense of Baltimore and the bombardment of Fort McHenry), a parade to the site reached its high point with the erection of the statue on top of the monument, accompanied by two "Grand Salutes" by artillery and a performance by the "military bands" of music composed for the occasion, the "Baltimore Monument March."²³ The *Baltimore Patriot*, edited by Isaac Munroe, Francis Scott Key's close friend, lauded the "full and brilliant military parade," singling out the bands of music present for particular praise.²⁴ He also pleaded with his readers to help fund the completion of the Battle Monument in highly wrought rhetoric

²² *Ithaca Herald*, August 9, 1837. Fraternal and other associational groups held similar parades. See for example "Odd Fellows Celebration in Oley," *Gazette of the Union, Golden Rule, Odd Fellows Family Companion* (New York) 11, no. 10 (1849); "Croton Water Celebration," *New York Spectator*, October 15, 1842 (a temperance parade).

²³ *Baltimore Patriot*, September 10, 1822.

²⁴ *Baltimore Patriot*, September 13, 1822. The Battle Monument was completed in 1825. In 1828, the Holliday Street Theatre celebrated Defender's Day with a performance of *She Would Be a Soldier* and patriotic music including "The Star Spangled Banner." See Ephemera Collection, W45, MdHS.

meant to signal familiar patriotic sentiment, exhorting them to take action “while every heart beats high with just pride, at the remembrance of the event.”²⁵

The twin sites of the Battle and Washington Monuments were nodes that marked patriotic celebration, and from them parades spread out through the city (see Figure 2.3). In 1820, a citywide July Fourth parade followed a straightforward route between the monuments. Ceremonies in the “natural amphitheatre” of Howard’s Park, adjacent to the unfinished monument, followed the parade. Music punctuated the beginning, middle, and end of the affair: “the performances were commenced with national music from the bands” and concluded with “another national air...and a salute of thirteen guns.”²⁶ Music also marked the huge funeral procession for William Henry Harrison in 1841: many bands were placed at intervals along the long, winding route of the procession, which began on Market Street and went past the Battle Monument on a circuitous route encompassing a large stretch of the city from east to west, ending finally at the Washington Monument. Newspaper reports noted nine different bands, including “Capt. Roundtree’s excellent band, in uniform, playing the admirable dirge dedicated to the memory of General Harrison....The band mustered its full strength, consisting of eighteen instruments.”²⁷

Parades drawing on patriotic tropes, as well as the celebration of national days and local civic events thus laced city streets into a complex performative network and inscribed patriotic affect as one of its primary valences. The network linked civic space to

²⁵ *Baltimore Patriot*, September 13, 1822.

²⁶ *Christian Watchman* (Boston), July 15, 1820; reprinted from *Baltimore Patriot*.

²⁷ *Baltimore Sun*, April 28, 1841.

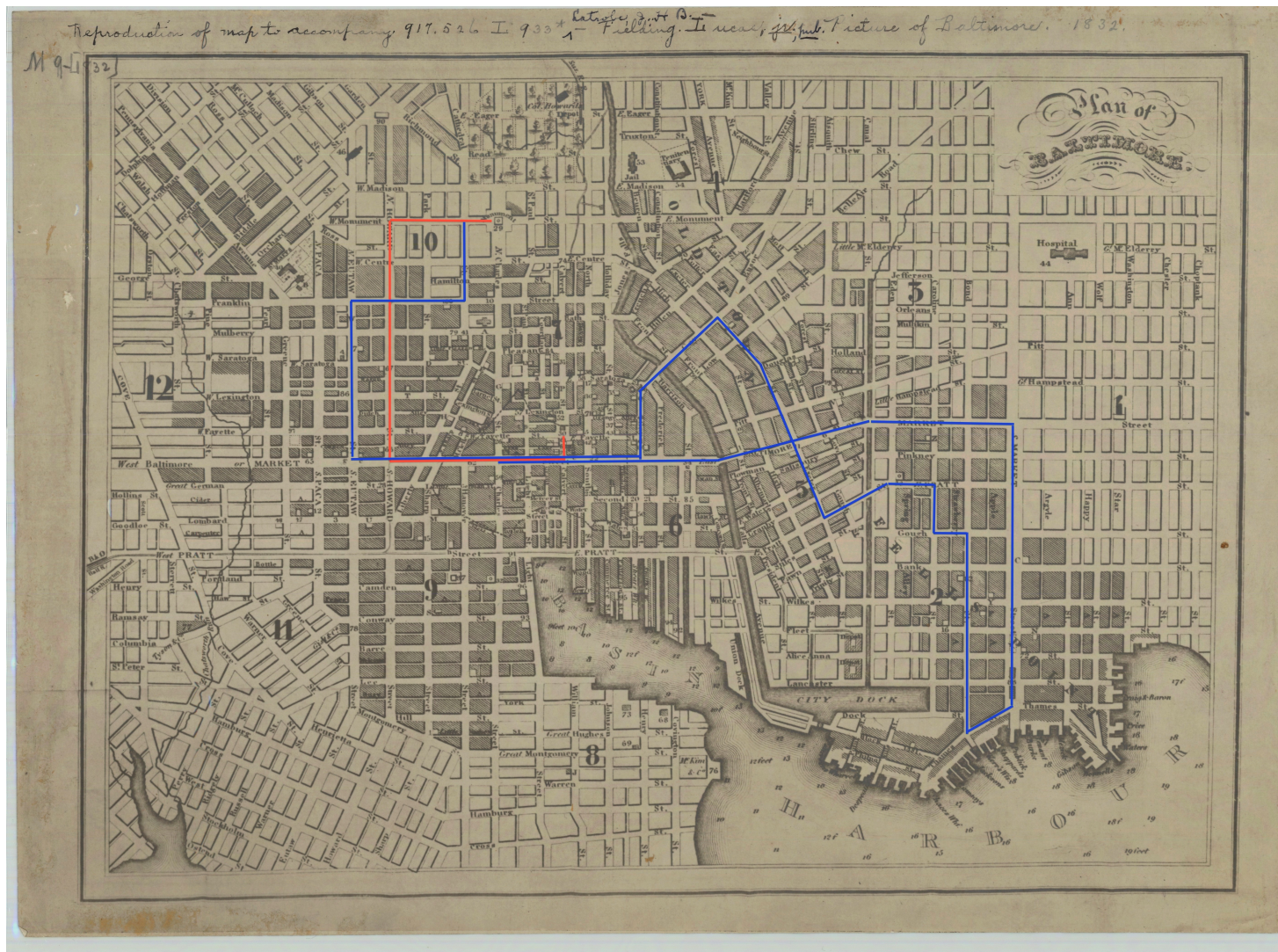


Figure 2.3. *Plan of Baltimore, 1832, With Parade Routes* (Baltimore: Lucas Fielding, 1832). Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore parade routes: the 1820 July Fourth parade is in red, while William Henry Harrison's funeral procession from 1841 is marked in blue.

commercial spaces like theaters, and to performances spanning the gamut from the solemn, to the joyous. This diversity encompassed celebrations outside the expected calendar of national days. Patriotic sentiment was even a key feature of events celebrating the economic and commercial expansion of the new nation. The commemorative celebration for the laying of the foundation-stone of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the “great national work which is intended and calculated to cement more strongly the union of the Eastern and the Western States,” took place on July 4, 1828.¹ It beautifully illustrated the musical ties that bound different spaces together – in this case a parade route, a temporary outdoor civic space, and the permanent space of the Holliday Street Theatre. Organizers chose July Fourth for the event, wishing to signal civic pride and affective patriotism.

Baltimore filled with visitors in the days before the celebration, so that on the morning of the Fourth the “immense throng of spectators...filled every window in Baltimore-street, and the pavement below....fifty thousand spectators, at least, must have been present.” The parade was massive and incorporated a great diversity of groups, including “bands of music, trades, and other bodies.” One focal point was a huge model, “completely rigged,” of a naval vessel, the “Union,” complete with uniformed sailors. Bands playing patriotic tunes were interspersed amongst the nationalist imagery on display: militia uniforms, banners emblazoned with patriotic verse, national flags, eagle figures, shields, and more. Charles Carrollton, one of the last surviving signers of the Declaration of Independence, gave the main public address at the site, accompanied by a march composed for the occasion, the “Carrollton March” (see Figure 2.4). John Cole,

¹ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, July 5, 1828.

THE CARROLLTON MARCH
 Performed at the Ceremony of
 commencing the
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad
 ON THE FOURTH OF JULY 1828.
 DEDICATED BY PERMISSION
 To the Hon. Charles Carroll of Carrollton,
 BY A. CLIFTON.
 Baltimore Published by John Cole.

1828

Maestoso.

Copyright secured according to Act of Congress July 1st 1828 by John Cole of the State of Maryland
 318

Figure 2.4. Sheet Music of "Carrollton March" (Baltimore: John Cole, 1831), Lester S. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. This march was composed for the cornerstone celebration for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1828.

composer and one of Baltimore's leading music printers, wrote the piece and after the ceremony issued it as sheet music for private piano performance. Notably, however, he also composed a "Song for the Day" that was a much simpler strophic song, with multiple verses printed in the pamphlet that included reportage of the celebration, and probably in handbill form on the Fourth itself.² This song, distributed to crowds at the ceremony or along the parade route, made it easy to sing along with its patriotic sentiments.

What was so notable about the celebration of the railroad was its easy appropriation of patriotic signifiers. There was no particular reason to lay the B&O cornerstone on July Fourth, but the twinning of private capital and civic boosterism with the patriotic sublime was prompted by the junctions between the spaces of performances: civic and commercial, public and private, indoor and outdoor, temporary and permanent. The elaboration of a multitude of places and venues for Americans to play and listen to music was a key factor in establishing and elucidating expressions of patriotism in the antebellum decades, spurring their transformation into a broadly shared public culture.

² All quotes in this paragraph are from *Detailed and Correct Account of the Grand Civic Procession, in the City of Baltimore, on the Fourth of July, 1828; in Honor of the Day, and in Commemoration of the Commencement of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Thomas Murphy, 1828), Rare MHE 2791.B7 1828 .B2, MdHS. This pamphlet, a reprint of a series of columns running concurrently in the *Baltimore American*, included music and lyrics of the "Song for the Day," written by John Cole. See also Dilts, *The Great Road*, 7-12.

—Chapter Three—

National Music and American Identity, 1790-1848

The Norwegian violinist Ole Bull was one of the first and greatest of the wave of European musical virtuosi who spilled onto the shores of America during the nineteenth century; whether sublime or simply flashy, all took advantage of the stamp of Old-World refinement that accompanied them as they entertained American audiences. After he performed his new piece “Niagara” in 1844, the mutual love affair between Bull and his American audiences inaugurated a vogue for music celebrating the sublime natural wonders of the young nation. In 1855, after years of touring in the United States, Bull also offered a prize of \$1,000 “for the best original grand opera by an American composer, and upon a strictly American subject.”¹

His call occasioned a response from an anonymous critic in Philadelphia who

¹ *Daily Ohio Statesman*, Columbus, Ohio, January 22, 1855.

wondered about the propriety of “our musical young gentlemen...turning their attention to American history” for inspiration. He also doubted whether young Americans were as yet capable of producing anything better than the then-popular waltzes, Italian opera potpourris, and Stephen Foster tunes. He argued that the new nation’s culture had not as yet reached the level of refinement necessary to give weighty subjects, or more complex musical forms, their proper due.² They should, he wrote, emulate their more cultivated and better-trained European masters rather than strain to produce an indigenous American music. Many, including the irascible Transcendentalist John Sullivan Dwight, who reprinted the Philadelphia piece in his eponymous *Journal*, agreed with this critic. But other guardians of culture saw in Bull’s Niagara and its celebration of the natural sublime hopeful signs that a distinctive and elevated national music was taking shape.

Intellectuals and tastemakers who debated the state of America’s music culture were participating in a discourse about national music and “national character,” which is the subject of the first section of this chapter. Although these elites often dismissed much of what went by the name of “patriotic music” in the United States as frivolous or crude, for them national music properly understood was patriotic music: almost by definition, it encouraged identification with the nation and its culture. And they had high hopes for it. As no less a figure than Lord Kames himself said, “patriotism...triumphs over every selfish motive, and is a firm support to every virtue.”³ Patriotic feeling, properly tuned, elevated morals.

² “National Music,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music* vol. VI no. 18 (February 3, 1855): 139-140.

³ Henry Homes, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man* (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1774, 1807), 130. See also Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1767); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, 1987); Daniel N. Robinson, “The Scottish Enlightenment and the American Founding,” *The Monist* 90, no. 2 (April 2007): 170-181.

Critics who debated national music followed the Scottish Enlightenment stages of civilization schema, in which societies were placed on a continuum ranging from the simplest savage and barbaric cultures to the most advanced, commercial, and refined. For these critics, the national music of the new republic was an indice of America's position on this continuum and raised vexed questions about its cultural heritage and future direction. Could a country that lacked a long history and therefore a culture rooted in "immemorial custom" produce a national music at all? If so, was it capable of the refined music characteristic of the most advanced civilizations? Dwight's answer was evidently "no." But perhaps, others said, this was not even desirable, given that refinement could slip so easily into corruption and effete luxury as it had in European aristocratic and court circles. Maybe the national music of simpler, freedom-loving peoples, like the Irish, who had only recently emerged from their barbaric pasts, was a better model for America.⁴

Men like Lowell Mason, the subject of the second section of this chapter, sought to elevate the nation's culture and morals through the reform of sacred music and music education. Public reformers like Mason tried to instill what they regarded as proper moral and aesthetic responses to music. But they were also quick to include popular songs with patriotic themes in schoolbooks and in songbooks for adult audiences, because they recognized their value in evoking emotional and moral attachment to the nation.

Critics and reformers like Mason who regarded themselves as custodians of culture did not debate national musical culture in a vacuum. As they tried to define what

⁴ David Hume quoted in Stuart D. Warner, Donald W. Livingston, eds, *Hume: Political Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), xxiii. See also Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts," *The Philosophical Works of David Hume, Vol. III* (Edinburgh: Printed for A. Black and W. Tate, 1826), 302-316; Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, 491-525. The fine line between refinement and luxury was evident in many settings: see for example Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 205-206.

a properly national music was, and to condemn other music as crude or frivolous, Americans were busily engaged in creating patriotic music through a variety of musical practices, molding it “in ways which gave expressive shape to their own lived experiences.”⁵ This was true even of concerts, thought to be the most elevated kind of musical performance, and the subject of the third section of this chapter. Concerts in the early nineteenth century included patriotic music of all kinds in their repertoire. Elite critics therefore had to contend with patriotic music that they would have liked to dismiss on aesthetic grounds. They might even have to concede that these productions, even when not meeting the highest standards of refinement, were ineffably “national” and right for the new republic. The creative tension in patriotic music that arose from the push and pull between elite discourse on national music, and the musical practices they encountered inside and outside the concert hall, is a prominent theme in this section and throughout the chapter.

The relation between region and nation in the music of the burgeoning West was an important aspect of the debate about music and the subject of the final section of this chapter. Performers and audiences in the new western territories and states produced music that centered on a regional character type. They populated their songs with simple, rustic, and even bumptious figures, who were nonetheless also industrious and forward-looking. Perhaps, said western boosters, this character and his region were the best embodiment of America’s future direction as it emerged out of its rude condition and into the ranks of enlightened civil societies. These regional songs became part of the

⁵ Henry Jenkins, introduction to *Understanding Popular Culture*, by John Fiske 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1989, 2010), xxvii.

repertoire of national music.⁶

The Debate over National Music

The idea of a “national music,” a body of compositions both geographically defined and expressing a specific national character, received a boost in 1792, when newspapers up and down the east coast published news of a meeting of Irish harpists that had taken place in Belfast earlier that year amidst the fervor of the French Revolution and the founding of the United Irishmen.⁷ This competition of Irish minstrels featuring the “native airs of Ireland” was intended to “prevent the original music of this country from being lost.” Even in its perilous condition—unprinted and in the hands of illiterate (and mostly blind) harpists—the English correspondent praised what he believed to be this music’s deep roots in a national character when he extolled “the power of simple melody” of these “native airs.”⁸

Reporting of the 1792 event in the American press was indicative of the hold “national” music had on the American imagination in the first half of the nineteenth century. Americans loved Irish and Scottish music. Fifteen years after the 1792 harp competition in Belfast, composer and music publisher James Hewitt advertised for subscribers for *The Music of Erin*, a collection of “Original Hibernian Melodies” (which was indeed published later that year). Hewitt remembered the “Bards” of 1792 in terms

⁶ See Edward D. Mansfield, *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Dr. Daniel Drake, M.D., Physician, Professor, and Author* (Cincinnati: Applegate, 1855), 307; Constance Rourke, *American Humor*, 38-65.

⁷ On Ireland and the French Revolution, see Paul Bew, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁸ “National Music of Ireland,” *New York Daily Gazette*, September 27, 1792; *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, September 25, 1792; *Charleston City Gazette*, October 15, 1792.

that linked musical performance to the whole of Irish history:

...a meeting was convened in the North of Ireland [in 1792], by a few remaining members of that ancient order, which had spread the ‘light of song’ over the gloom of unilluminated ignorance; or softened the ferocity of uncivilized heroism....Many of the airs (several of which are Carolan’s) and poems intended to compose this little selection, were originally collected in what may be deemed the Classic Wilds of Ireland – where Ossian sung, where Fingal fought, and Ofear [*sic*: probably O’Farrell or O’Fearghail] fell.⁹

The popular perception of the Irishman at the turn of the nineteenth century was that he was at once a drinker and brawler of the lower sorts and a musician and songwriter seemingly formed by nature. The songs in Hewitt’s collection were, according to one historian, “patriotic, proud, alcoholic, and earthy.” In fact, the editor of one collection felt obliged to vouch for the virtue of his Irish songs, which he promised would not cause “Fair Americans” to blush.¹⁰

Americans had quickly and effectively mythologized Irish “national” music, in effect excising it from the course of recorded history and placing it in the immemorial past, with its mythical or legendary Fingals and Ossians. Such supposedly authentic emanations of a deeply-embedded mythic cultural past was “national” music: “a generally received opinion, that most countries have a music of their own, the character of which may be called national.”¹¹ Historical figures like Hewitt’s and others’ “Carolan” (in actuality Turlough O’Carolan, a sixteenth to seventeenth century harpist and composer who wrote many later-famous tunes) took on the patina of myth. And Irish and

⁹ “The Music of Erin,” *Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1807.

¹⁰ Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 43-44, quotes from 44.

¹¹ William Gardiner, *The Music of Nature; or, an attempt to prove that what is passionate and pleasing in the art of singing, speaking, and performing upon musical instruments, is derived from the sounds of the animated world* (Boston, 1841), 351. Gardiner’s tome was originally published in England in 1832; it was republished at least twice in America (in 1838 and 1841). The American edition was dedicated to Thomas Moore.

Scottish music were only the most popular bodies of national music; music from other countries like Italy, Germany, Spain, Russia and many more were similarly singled out and endowed with an immemorial past. National music, it was thought, even characterized ancient Israel, Egypt, and Greece, and editorialists constructed elaborate histories tracing the course of national music from classical civilizations through the middle ages to their current enlightened age, all in order to explain its affective power: “it was music which imparted to [poetry] its popular power; its power to alarm, to agitate, to melt, to win.”¹² Such commentaries sought in the music of the immemorial past explanations for its importance to national characters of the present.

But the United States did not have an immemorial past, and contemporaries wrestled with the question of national identity and national music in the context of the nation’s newness. How could a new nation, founded within living memory on the basis of appeals to an enlightened and rational polity, inculcate a collective identity in the absence of ethnohistorical traditions?

Commentators solved this dilemma in a variety of ways. Some made an appeal to individual musical memory: the “sounds assimilating with our earliest and most innocent employments and recreations.”¹³ National identity was, in other words, nostalgia for the sounds of youth. Others contrasted the “good old songs” with the “indecent” of the current “fashionable” songs, contrasting the latter with the “moral character” of national music.¹⁴ In practice, the lack of a deeply-rooted past made available to Americans a

¹² “Music,” *New-England Magazine* (December, 1831: 457. See also “On National Music,” *The Euterpeiad: an Album of Music, Poetry & Prose*, New York (April 15, 1830): 1; “German Music,” *The Euterpeiad*, New York (June 1, 1830): 25.

¹³ C. Dingley, “Original Communications,” *Euterpeiad*, New York (September 1, 1830): 73.

¹⁴ “Secular Songs,” *Western Recorder*, July 27, 1830, 120.

variety of models for national music from which they could select styles, genres, and even individual songs to fit their taste and the situation. Francis Scott Key's use of a British popular song was one example. Even more telling, Americans directly borrowed the specific patriotic songs of other nations in at least two significant instances: the well-known Scottish patriotic song—in fact, Scotland's *de facto* national anthem—"Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled," and "America," which was of course "God Save the King" with new lyrics.¹⁵ Americans' willingness to appropriate patriotic music and reshape it for their own needs circumvented the perceived problem of newness, linking the nation's recent past with its present by using music from other countries thought to be "national" as models, and thus creating a new nationalist narrative.¹⁶

Appropriation extended to specific musical styles. A subset of patriotic music made use of what musicologist Richard Crawford has called the "song of yearning," in the style of another Irishman, Thomas Moore, and his popular ballads.¹⁷ Moore was born in Ireland although he spent most of his life in England: he was from early in life a talented poet (his first publication was a translation of the odes of Anacreon) but was also a gifted amateur musician. His publications of "traditional" Irish melodies made him

¹⁵ Usually known today as "My Country 'Tis of Thee." See Robert James Branham and Stephen J. Hartnett, *Sweet Freedom's Song: "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and Democracy in America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Branham and Hartnett emphasize the martial use of "America" during the Civil War period with an account of an 1861 performance at a militia drill and concert: a correspondent reported, "Oh, how grandly it sounded through the woods!" When the regimental band took up the refrain, he added, "it crashed louder than before" (123).

¹⁶ Duncan S.A. Bell, "Mythscape: memory, mythology, and national identity," *The British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (March 2003): 66 and *passim*. See also Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Maurice Halbwachs, ed. And trans. Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁷ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 248.

famous in Britain and especially in America.¹⁸

The “yearning” effect was an aural portrayal of emotional remembrance, “flights of feeling and imagination” characterized musically by “unexpected [melodic] leaps that are then filled in by falling movement, mostly stepwise.”¹⁹ This construction is readily apparent in one of Moore’s first and best-known ballads, 1808’s “Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms,” which became one of the nineteenth century’s most popular songs, through the sales of the *Irish Melodies* and through myriad reprints as sheet music (see Figure 3.1). The melody climbs to a high F in the second measure of the verse on “young charms,” then falls stepwise over the next measure before climbing again. This figure was one aural pattern through which audiences came to associate Moore’s music with a sense of yearning. Significantly, this emotional valence was thought to signal the music’s ancient provenance: Irish music was thought to be akin to the music of ancient Israel or Greece in its antiquity. To these early nineteenth-century critics, invested as they were in ethno-historical definitions of nation, Irish music was “sui generis,” and was “too strongly marked ever to be mistaken” for another nation’s music.²⁰ Its antiquity positioned it within Kames’ developmental scheme and guaranteed that it was the authentic emanation of the Irish “genius.”²¹

¹⁸ There were ten volumes published between 1808 and 1834. For the background of Moore’s lengthy popularity, see Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 47. See also John Warrack. “Moore, Thomas,” and W.H. Husk, et al, “Stevenson, Sir John,” *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed December 17, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19067>.

¹⁹ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 248; see also Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 51-52, 55-56; Susan Key, “Sound and Sentimentality: Nostalgia in the Songs of Stephen Foster,” *American Music* 13, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 145-166.

²⁰ J.M., “Historical and Critical Observations on Ancient Irish Music,” *Euterpeiad, an Album of Music, Poetry, & Prose*, May 15, 1831, 13.

²¹ “Ancient Irish Music, no. IV,” *Euterpeiad*, July 15, 1831, 62. The connection to the stages of civilization was explicit: one critic wrote that “the most exquisite effusions of [music] have had their origin among the simplest and most uncultivated people. Nor can all that taste and science bring afterwards to the task do

BELIEVE ME IF ALL THESE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS

Baltimore. Printed and Sold at CARRS Music Store 36 Baltimore Street.

With
Feeling

Be - lieve me if all these en - dearing young Charms, Which I

gaze on so fondly to day, Were to change by to morrow, and

flee in my arms, Like fairy gifts fading a - way, Thou wouldst

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation on aged paper. It features a title, a publisher's address, and four systems of music. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. There are some handwritten numbers and markings above the first system of music.

Figure 3.1. "Believe Me, If All These Endearing Young Charms," sheet music (Baltimore: Carr's Music store, n.d.). Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection.

more in general, than diversify by new combinations those first wild strains of gaiety and passion." See "Ancient Irish Music: Thomas Moore," *Musical Reporter*, April 1841, 161. See also "Ancient Irish Music, no. II," *Euterpeiad*, June 15, 1831, 44; "Ancient Irish Music, no. V," *Euterpeiad*, August 1, 1831, 74; Bell, "Mythsapes," 67.

The popular subgenre usually rested on a woman's lament for a departed son, husband, or lover at war. A richly illustrated setting of Thomas Moore's song "Go Where Glory Waits Thee" shows a series of scenes of the soldier departing for the battlefield, leaving his grieving lover behind to contemplate his heroism and sacrifice (see Figure 3.2). The illustrations equate the departed with a mythic ancient hero in armored garb. American composers appropriated the form for their own compositions. Enduring popular songs exemplifying the theme included James Hewitt's "The Wounded Hussar" from 1800 and his son John Hill Hewitt's "The Minstrel's Return'd From the War," written in 1825.²² Songs like these, printed as sheet music for home performance or played in concerts and recitals, extended patriotic themes of sacrifice and martial nobility beyond military settings into the commercial realm.

Martial music was, of course, a central part of national music. The musical commentariat considered military music an important sign of national virtue. The Scots certainly displayed it: "a species of martial music called *Pibrochs*, rouses the native Highlander as the sound of a trumpet does a war house, and produces effects little less marvelous than those recorded of the ancient music."²³ Creating martial music in America was, for such critics, a high priority. During the War of 1812, one commentator urged that "in this emergency, every spring should be put in motion to propel the grand

²² John Tasker Howard, "The Hewitt Family in American Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 17 no. 1 (January, 1931): 25-39; Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 32-33; 102-104; John Hill Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall: or, Glimpses of the past* (Baltimore, 1877). The younger Hewitt settled in Baltimore and became a music and newspaper publisher, in addition to his prolific songwriting career.

²³ "Effects of Martial Music," *The Lady's Miscellany or, Weekly Visitor* (Aug 22, 1812), 283. The pibroch is an elaborate form of Scottish theme and variations.



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Figure 3.2. Daniel MacLise, *Illustration for Thomas Moore's "Go Where Glory Waits Thee."* From Moore, MacLise, *Moore's Irish Melodies* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846).

national machine to one grand object – *Martial spirit and discipline*.”²⁴

Commentators compiled detailed taxonomies of various national musics, evaluating and ranking them as bodies. There were “many pleasing *national melodies* in *Spain* and in *Russia*,” while “*The French music*, in so far as it is national, is in a most wretched taste.” Meanwhile, “*The National music of Germany*, doubtless possesses [*sic*]...a wildness of character peculiar in most cases to remote districts where the people retain their primitive rudeness and simplicity.” As for England and the United States, “neither...have a style of music peculiar to either country.” Conversely, “the national music of Scotland is daily becoming the most popular, and is very deservedly the best national, and most fashionable music extant.”²⁵ Antiquarians even pored over the supposed Biblical and classic origins of national music, which “roused the martial spirit of the fiery Macedonian.”²⁶ Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, a cadre of proto-“expert” commentators classified and even created the folklore of national cultures.

It is not surprising, then, that the veritable cataract of interpretations, judgments, hierarchies, and histories of all these national bodies of music would easily encompass the realm of patriotic virtues, and in the process be pregnant with meaning for the writers of all these commentaries—and their own country:

The moral character of a people depends much—very much upon its National Music. It is the beautiful and patriotic music of Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, which gives a great proportion of the virtue of the people. Aside from the direct application of religious principles, the music of a nation is that which can easiest change the character and fix the morals of any community. Away, then, with our present

²⁴ *National Advocate* (New York), August 24, 1814.

²⁵ “Of National Music,” *The Euterpeiad: or, Musical Intelligencer, and Ladies Gazette* 1 19 (Aug 5, 1820): 75, italics in original. This *Euterpeiad* is unrelated to the similarly named magazine published around 1830.

²⁶ “Music,” *New England Magazine* (December 1831): 457; Rev. Edmund Foster, *A Discourse Pronounced Before the Middlesex Martial Band and a Number of Military Officers and Soldiers in Uniform, At Westford, March 3 1808* (Cambridge, Mass., 1808).

degraded style of Song, and let us have such music as becomes an intelligent and moral people.²⁷

The commentator not only links national character to music, he cites it as the single most important factor in the nation's collective identity. "National music" is, he writes, synonymous with "patriotic music." Like religion, it had enormous power to shape the morals of a people. The editor of the *Euterpiad*, the literary magazine that printed this commentary, emphatically agreed and tied the theme of uplift to the education of children: "the subject on which [the writer] treats, is of the greatest importance to the rising generation, and is deserving [of] [t]he serious consideration of every parent."²⁸

Some critics saw popular song, including Irish or Scottish songs, and even favorite patriotic standards, as evidence of America's lack of refinement. These songs were not what they meant by national music. "In a word, we have no national music now," one author lamented in 1812.²⁹ Concerned critics tried to pinpoint the problem in the present lack of musical institutions and even proper places for performance. As early as 1807, a critic writing upon the occasion of a visiting German violinist's concert in Baltimore bemoaned:

What will this *Virtuoso* do here?...we have neither large theatres; nor church choirs; nor subscription concerts; nor military music; nor national academies....This exquisite skill then, will be buried like that of so many other Europeans, who vegetate here already, to our *shame* and our *detriment...in the very Siberia of the arts*.³⁰

Baltimore, it was alleged, lacked every possible support for decent music. Such concerns

²⁷ "Modern Songs," *The Euterpiad*, July 15 1830, 50.

²⁸ "Modern Songs," *The Euterpiad*, July 15 1830, 50.

²⁹ J. Melville, "An Oddity," *The Lady's Miscellany; or, Weekly Visitor, and Entertaining Companion for the Use and Amusement of Both Sexes* (Aug 1, 1812).

³⁰ "Fine Arts. Music," *The Observer* 1 21 (May 23 1807): 333.

were echoed throughout the first half of the century by critics who saw Americans' musical practices as improperly rude.

To return to the example that began this chapter, Ole Bull and his *Niagara* exemplified the tensions over what constituted national music and musical refinement. Critics responded to Bull's *Niagara* in at least two different ways: some praised its tone painting of American sublimity, while others criticized its vulgar showiness and, as we saw, scorned Bull's prize for an American opera as misguided and likely to result in fripperies. Not even the memory of George Washington was safe. Our Philadelphia critic scornfully imagined "the Father of his Country [having] his fame perfected by some big Italian basso, who shall rant over the stage."³¹ The choice was stark. American musicians must, until their rude country got "older, richer, and more composed," pattern themselves after refined "nations where Art has been studiously pursued for ages."³² Otherwise, they would have nothing to "fall back upon" other than "Yankee Doodle, The Star Spangled Banner, or the negro melodies."³³ In short, Handel and Haydn should be America's "models," not Thomas Moore's ballads, not to speak of the indigenous productions of slaves, workingmen, or even self-taught gentleman amateurs.

Conversely, the majority of critics perceived "Niagara" and its performance to signal the country's coming of age: "a new era in the history of the fine arts and public taste" in a country that for too long had been "fettered by this sense of inferiority."³⁴ The critics who praised Bull's performances were fully invested in laudatory descriptions of the audience's fervent response, which they took to be a powerful example of patriotic

³¹ "National Music," *Dwight's Journal of Music*, Feb 3 1855, 140.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ *New York Herald*, December 20, 1844.

feeling.³⁵ One reviewer (as most did) translated the aural experience into specific word-pictures of the “sublime catastrophe” of Niagara Falls, just as Francis Scott Key attempted to do at Fort McHenry in 1814:

Gradually, and in almost imperceptible succession, fall in the other voices of the scene – the growling and roaring of forest beasts, the gurgling and dashing of the upper waters as they leap madly from their dizzy height into the whirlpool – the winds signing and moaning through the trees, and singing their everlasting anthem to the thunderbass of the cataract – the sharp, gay warbling of birds that fill the branches; and, higher still, as the great oratorio progresses, flitting dream-like over the mingled mass of sound, are heard the voices of spirits, as if dropped from the bles[t] heaven above...Every body appeared stupified [*sic*] and overwhelmed, and every body inquired, with the eyes, of his companion or his neighbor, ‘What does it mean? what has happened to us all!’³⁶

As with Key’s “Star Spangled Banner,” descriptions of “Niagara” placed listeners as eyewitnesses to a vivid scene, and invited them to contemplate the sublimity of a national icon—in this case a geographical one. The composer himself and “Niagara’s” auditors were emotionally transported by the musical version of America’s natural sublime, and considered it to be America’s distinctive national music.³⁷

Ole Bull, meanwhile, was a performer, not a critic. He readily catered in his concerts to his audiences’ interest in patriotic musical displays without too much concerned about his compositions’ theoretical significance. He had a piece ready-made for such functions, composed during his American tour: “Memory of Washington,” which combined the sort of tone painting he also attempted in “Niagara” with the

³⁵ Remarkably, and unusually for nineteenth century pieces, the music has been completely lost; we have only public descriptions of its performance.

³⁶ “Ole Bull’s ‘Niagara’ – A Musical Excitement,” New York *Herald*, December 20, 1844.

³⁷ Furtwangler, *Acts of Discovery*; Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, esp. chap 2. The sublimity of American nature was praised prominently by, among others, Lewis and Clark, and especially Thomas Jefferson, in his paeans to Virginia’s Natural Bridge and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah at Harper’s Ferry. Some of the best-known visual representations of the natural sublime are from the so-called Hudson River School; see *The Book of Nature: American Painters and the Natural Sublime: An Exhibition at the Hudson River Museum* (Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 1984), 5-17.

melodies of favorite patriotic tunes including “Yankee Doodle” and “Hail, Columbia.” In this case, he evoked not a natural wonder, but an epic battle. (As one reviewer described it, “the second movement begins with the sound of an alarm bell, followed by the rush to battle. The themes advance and retreat, mingle and cross each other, like two contending armies.”) Bull was not above fulfilling audience requests, either. Here is one Boston critic’s account of his own stunned reaction:³⁸

A voice in the crowd called for Yankee Doodle. It shocked me, like Harlequin tumbling on the altar of a temple....But, bowing to the audience, he smiling drew the bow across his violin, and our national tune rose on the air, transfigured, in a veil of glorious variations. It was Yankee Doodle in a state of clairvoyance. A wonderful proof of how the most common and trivial may be exalted by the influx of the infinite.³⁹

Bull’s impromptu “Yankee Doodle” and the reviewer’s complex response neatly encapsulate the debate about national music. The reviewer was archly dismissive of the song itself and initially “shocked” by the mixing of what he was starting to identify as “high” and “low” genres of music (“Harlequin” suddenly appearing at the “temple”). But Ole Bull transfigured or “exalted” the song and his audience (now touched by an experience of the “infinite”).

Music Education and National Music

The push for music reform first in churches and then in schools promoted national music. Musicians, composers, tunebook compilers, and critics had always viewed music

³⁸ *Boston Evening Transcript*, October 14, 1845; see also “Musical Department,” *Broadway Journal*, December 6, 1845, 338.

³⁹ “Musical World: A Few Words More About Ole Bull,” *New World; A Weekly Family Journal of Popular, Literature, Science, Art and News*, January 6, 1844, 25.

as a way to mold individual character. As early as the so-called Singing Controversy in New England in the 1720s, music reform was thought necessary to properly praise God: early reforms included the singing of original hymns and the institution of church choirs. By the advent of the First New England School and William Billings' new fusing style, innovations in church music had become associated with the promotion of republican virtue. In the early nineteenth century, improved music in churches and schools became linked to the goal of elevating national character through the dissemination of patriotic music.⁴⁰

Early nineteenth-century critics recognized the important role of patriotic songs during the American Revolution, but argued that America had advanced musically since Billings' day. Looking backward, Nathaniel Gould, the nineteenth-century historian of church music, praised William Billings as "the father of concerts or musical exhibitions in this country," acknowledging that his "lively and spirited airs," especially the ubiquitous "Chester," were "exactly suited to the excited feelings of the people" and a "powerful instrument, for the time, in exciting the spirit of liberty."⁴¹ Still, he portrayed Billings as an unlettered man (a tanner of "humble origin....ignorant of language" who wrote "his first tunes with chalk, on the walls of the building, while tending [his] mill") and his fusing tunes, with their appeal to untempered emotion, as no longer suited to modern conditions.⁴² Billings represented a heroic but coarse period in America's past. Tellingly, Gould ridiculed past performance practices. The concerts Billings helped

⁴⁰ Richard Crawford, "Massachusetts Musicians and the Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody," *Music in Colonial Massachusetts* ed. Barbara Lambert, vol. II (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), 583; Gilbert Chase, *America's Music*, chap. 2.

⁴¹ Nathaniel D. Gould, *History of Church Music in America* (Boston: A.N. Johnson, 1853), 41.

⁴² Ibid.

popularize “would perhaps appear rather ludicrous at the present day. For instance, when the words ‘clap your hands’ occurred in their music, they used to make the action correspond with the words, and all clap their hands in time.”⁴³ For Gould, the spectacle of people clapping their hands to music was risible: he used it to make a polemical argument against contemporary rowdy theatre audiences and religious revivalists. Gould’s espousal of uplift through properly reformed music and his doubts about popular music were widely shared by other pre-Civil war music reformers.⁴⁴

The ideals of sacred music reform and its version of music education came together in one figure: Lowell Mason. Remembered today mostly as the progenitor of public school music education, Mason was one of the most powerful voices in the musical world of antebellum America: his various psalmodies, manuals, school texts, and tunebooks were best-selling and very influential. A reformer of psalmody, he was more broadly a key figure in the push to edify the public through the propagation of refined music, both sacred and secular. He was born in Massachusetts in 1792, but during a long sojourn working as a merchant and bank clerk in Savannah, Georgia he published his first important musical compilation, 1822’s *Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music*.⁴⁵

Mason’s hymnbook was a best-seller, going through almost two dozen editions in the succeeding years. It also leaned on the aura of refinement associated with the prestigious Handel & Haydn Society (founded in 1815) and its high-flown views about

⁴³ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁴ On the early nineteenth century ideal of edification through music, see Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 131-134; cf. Michael Broyles, “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44 no. 3 (October 1, 1991): 453, and Broyles, “*Music of the Highest Class: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁴⁵ Chase, *America’s Music*, 132-134.

music. Many of the tunes for its various lyrics were taken from the music of lauded European masters like Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, and Mason also promoted his work by including recommendations from noted foreign-born musicians, who praised its combination of taste and sophistication: “the [selection of tunes] are [*sic*] harmonized with great accuracy, taste and judgment, according to the acknowledged principles of musical science.”⁴⁶ In 1822, the “science” of music, which combined the ability to read music (thought to be uncommon) with a sense of how music produced emotional response, was still new.

Like Francis Scott Key, Mason combined his advocacy of refinement with evangelical piety (he had undergone a conversion experience sometime before 1814).⁴⁷ And like Key, he emphasized the role of refined emotion in the proper performance of music, contrasting his sacred music with what he saw as the previous century’s leaden, unfeeling performances. “Singers should always recollect, however, that the mere mechanical execution of music is insufficient. Music is emphatically the language of the heart....Let the singer *feel*, deeply feel...let him give expression to...sublime and ennobling thoughts.”⁴⁸ Science and taste in music included properly calibrated emotion, and these principles applied to all music, not just sacred song.⁴⁹

Reformers and others seeking to make a living from music instruction promoted a

⁴⁶ Another recommender wrote, “to all the lovers of sacred music, I cheerfully recommend it as a work in which taste, science, and judgment are happily combined.” Lowell Mason, *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* (Boston, 1822).

⁴⁷ A long letter dated June 8, 1814 offers forceful religious advice to each member of his family back in Massachusetts. To his father, for example, he wrote: “you know not the satisfaction I should experience from an evidence of your real conversion. Why, why will you not embrace the Saviour?...you are already on the border of eternity....O that his glorification might be in your salvation and not in your damnation...” Quoted in Broyles, *Music of the Highest Class*, 66.

⁴⁸ Lowell Mason, *Lyra Sacra*, Special Collections, Eisenhower Libraries, Johns Hopkins University (1832).

⁴⁹ See Mason, *Handel and Haydn Society*, 1822, preface.

steady growth in private academies, singing schools, Sunday schools, and individual musical instruction, and after 1830 reformers could also count on a groundswell of support for common school reform to expand opportunities for uplift through musical education.⁵⁰ In 1833, Lowell Mason founded the Boston Academy of Music, while his brother Timothy founded a similar institution the following year in Cincinnati.⁵¹ The beginnings of access to formal music education directly fueled the spread of patriotic music, by training musicians and audiences who were more knowledgeable producers and consumers of music.

The publication of songbooks for schools and for adults also promoted the spread of patriotic music. Lowell Mason's songbooks for children, such as his 1841 *Boston School Song Book*, aimed at students from ages ten to sixteen, contained patriotic songs pitched for instructional use: simple, hymn-like tunes usually in either three- or four-part harmony or in melody with a simple piano accompaniment.⁵² Mason and other compilers of school songbooks frequently included patriotic songs with new lyrics that praised America's natural beauty, its political freedoms, and its unity as a nation. An 1834 example, penned by influential writer and editor Sarah Hale, begins:

⁵⁰ James A. Keene, *History of Music Education*, 74-154. See also Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980); Edward B. Birge, *History of Public School Music in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1937, 1966); Frederick M. Binder, *The Age of the Common School: 1830-1865* (New York: Wiley, 1974); Siobhan Moroney, "Birth of a Canon: The Historiography of Early Republican Educational Thought," *History of Education Quarterly*, 39, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 476-491; Daniel Walker Howe, "Church, State, and Education in the Young American Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 22, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 1-24.

⁵¹ John Beale, *Public Worship, Private Faith: Sacred Harp and American Folksong* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 47-52; Keene, *History of Music Education*, 110-113, 166-171; John J. Rowe, "Cincinnati's Early Cultural and Educational Enterprises," *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 8 (July-October 1950): 211-216; 304-310.

⁵² Lowell Mason, *The Boston School Song Book*, Special Collections, Johns Hopkins University (1841), preface. An inscription hints at this volume's staying power: it was still in circulation three years after its publication, when given to a "William Dalrymple" in September of 1844.

My native land, my native land –
O 'tis a lovely land to me;
I bless my God that I was born
Where man is *free*.⁵³

Mason's *Boston School Song Book* featured a similar song several years later titled "We Know a Land."⁵⁴ These songs were intended to introduce children to basic concepts of republican citizenship and love of country suffused with Protestant moral values.

Some of these songs were explicitly martial in imagery and tone. In 1831's *Juvenile Lyre*, advertised as the first children's songbook published in the United States, Lowell Mason included the "Marseilles Hymn," noting admiringly that it "has often nerved the arm to bloodshed."⁵⁵ Mason himself was a careful observer of military music, and would on his two journeys to Europe in the 1830s and the early 1850s sprinkle his journals and letters (later published) with observations about the instrumentation and repertoire of European military bands.⁵⁶ He also emphasized that patriotic feeling stimulated by military sights and sounds was proper to women as well as men. For

⁵³ Sarah J. Hale, *The School Song Book, Adapted to the Scenes of the School Room. Written for American Children and Youth* (Boston, 1834), 60. Hale acknowledged Lowell Mason for setting some of her earlier published poems to music.

⁵⁴ Mason, *Boston School Song Book*, 54-55. Other examples are in Lowell Mason, *The Juvenile Singing School* (Boston, 1844); and Benjamin F. Baker, *Baker's American School Music Book: Containing a Thorough Elementary System* (Boston, 1845), 106-107. See Nicholas E. Tawa, "The Parlor Song in Music Education," in *Sweet Songs for Gentle Americans: The Parlor Song in America, 1790-1860* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980), 44-63; cf. Margaret A. Nash, "Contested Identities: Nationalism, Regionalism, and Patriotism in Early American Textbooks," *History of Education Quarterly* 49 no. 4 (November 2009): 417-441; Eileen Ka-May Cheng, "American Historical Writers and the Loyalists, 1788-1856: Dissent, Consensus, and American Identity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 no. 4 (Winter, 2003): 491-519.

⁵⁵ Lowell Mason, Elam Ives, *Juvenile Lyre: or hymns and songs, religious, moral, and cheerful, set to appropriate music* (Boston 1831, reprinted 1833, 1835), v; Keene, *History of Music Education*, 96-101.

⁵⁶ For example, the "very fine" military music in Munich was divided between brass and woodwind bands: their performances featured "say an overture first, and then one or two pieces of lighter music." Lowell Mason, *Musical Letters from Abroad, Including Detailed Accounts of the Birmingham, Norwich, and Dusseldorf Musical Festivals of 1852* (New York: Da Capo Press, [1854] 1967), 128-129; see also Michael Broyles, ed., *Lowell Mason, A Yankee Musician in Europe: The 1837 Journals of Lowell Mason* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1990).

example, he admired the main character of Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*, a "bold soldier girl," because she showed that when citizens had "imbibed the military spirit," they would carry their "love of the parade, the march, the trumpet, and the drum into the drawing room."⁵⁷

Publishers of general readers, not just specialized handbooks, also stressed the importance of patriotic music. The McGuffey readers, the most popular of all nineteenth-century school primers included, beginning in 1837, the well-known song "America," calling it a "National Hymn."⁵⁸ Whether writing new songs in the sacral patriotic mode or including familiar patriotic songs like "America," reformers like Lowell Mason, Hale, and McGuffey linked the patriotic sublime to their educational reforms.

Reformers also courted adults as they sought to refine public morals and feeling through song. An 1838 magazine editorial by one "H.K." was delighted to report that both sacred singing school and voluntary societies "formed for the practice of secular music" were spreading rapidly "in our cities and large towns" and "our country towns." He looked forward to the day when "throughout the land the hours of relaxation shall become vocal with songs, cheerful, tender, and patriotic."⁵⁹ Lowell Mason's prolific pen engaged this market as well, in a string of songbooks for adults like *The Gentleman's Glee Book* (1845), *The Odeon* (1848), and *The Lyrist* (1838). *The Odeon*, for example,

⁵⁷ Mason, *Musical Letters from Abroad*, 49.

⁵⁸ *McGuffey Fourth Reader* (Cincinnati, 1837), McGuffey Reader Collection, The Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University. See also "Juvenile Music," *Quarterly Sunday School Magazine*, April, 1831, 55; Jonathan Burton, "Lay On, McGuffey: Excerpting Shakespeare in Nineteenth-Century Schoolbooks," in *Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship, and Performance*, ed. Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans, and Mimi Godfrey (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 95-111; Richard David Mozier, *Making the American Mind: Social and Moral Ideas in the McGuffey Readers* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947). On nationalist symbolism in printed educational materials, see Francois Furstenberg, *In the Name of the Father*, 34-46.

⁵⁹ H.K., "The Boston Glee Book," *Boston Musical Gazette*, Sep 19, 1838, 83-84.

published the “National Air” of “America.” *The Gentleman’s Glee Book* contained no less than six patriotic songs for four voices, including such titles as “The Youth’s Patriotic Vow” and “The Patriotic Band,” all with stirring sentiments about national glory and honor.⁶⁰ Printed songbooks, reform of childhood education, and adult musical instruction all brought the sacral project of musical uplift to a national public.

Concertizing National Music

The rhetoric of edification and refinement helped bring the idea of “national music” into a space thought to be a venue for the display of sensibility and refined deportment: the concert. Music reformers interested in national music as part of the journey towards refinement saw concerts as a method to demonstrate proper taste, even in patriotic music. Early attempts to organize and institutionalize musical performance, like the formation of local music clubs for choral singing or instrumental performance, gave proponents of refined national music new places to talk about and evaluate, and patriotic music another place to be performed—tastefully.

Early national Americans began to organize concerts around a variety of voluntary associations with the purpose, expressed or implied, of refining American musical tastes. Such concerts, whether instrumental or vocal, could and did take place almost anywhere, including outdoors in public gardens or on pleasure cruises. They increasingly included performances of European forms like selections from oratorios,

⁶⁰ Lowell Mason, *The Gentleman’s Glee Book: consisting of a selection glees for men’s voices, by the most admired German composers* (Boston, 1845), Special Collections, Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University. This copy was evidently a gift: the inscription reads, “Mr. Charles Mulchahey with the respect of H. Gustav Tiepke.”

instrumental pieces by the likes of Mozart, Boccherini, and Cherubini, and operatic themes.⁶¹ The Handel & Haydn Society, founded in 1815 and for which Lowell Mason compiled his first bestseller, was the best known of a myriad of such clubs and societies that sprang up across the country in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was dedicated to “improving the style of performing sacred musick,” which to them meant privileging the oratorios of Handel and Haydn, at the time the dual exemplars of what such clubs meant by cultivated music.⁶² Usually composed of members of the burgeoning middle class, choral societies marshaled their love of music into what they perceived as the salutary goal of improving the musical taste of their community and country; they doubtless also received a certain measure of social reward or respectability along with the musical fruits of their labor of love.⁶³ The concertizing of groups such as the Handel & Haydn Society marshaled ideals of refinement and edification around actual performance.

Patriotic and martial music was part of this refined setting. An 1817 concert given to welcome the Virginian President James Monroe to Boston on his nationwide tour opened its typical program of chorales, solos, and duets from the oratorios of Handel and Haydn with patriotic music: a “military movement...called *President Monroe’s March*, ”

⁶¹ “Concert” has never been a very distinct category, but one clear distinction then and now is its lack of staging, thus distinguishing it from theatre and opera. Early national Americans tended to use the distinctive phrase “concert of vocal and instrumental music” (especially in advertising) for “concert,” similar to the way “band of music” described a wind band of any sort.

⁶² Quote from *Constitution of the Handel and Haydn Society: Instituted April, 1815* (Boston, 1815), 4. All of these societies were short-lived, with the single exception of the Handel & Haydn Society, which not only exists today but is still a central cultural institution in Boston. Its survival owes much not only to historical contingency (not least its association with Lowell Mason) but also to its being ensconced in Boston’s Brahmin community, with its century-long love affair with “high” culture. See H. Earle Johnson, *Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston*, 2nd ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1965, 1981), 7-55; *Boston Musical Gazette*, May 2, 1838, 8.

⁶³ Johnson, *Hallelujah, Amen!*, 11; Fiona Magowan, Louise Josepha Wrazen, “Introduction: Musical Intersections, Embodiments, and Emplacements,” in *Performing Gender, Place, and Emotion in Music: Global Perspectives*, ed. Fiona Magowan and Josepha Wrazen (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 2-3.

and also featured an original “ode, sung at the celebration of peace, and the birth day of *WASHINGTON*, Feb. 22, 1815.” The ode was full of high-flown rhetoric about peace—not surprisingly for this stridently anti-administration section of the country during the late war:

Wreaths for the Chieftain we honour, who planted
The Olive of Peace in the soil that he gain’d;
Foemen his praise ‘neath its shelter have chanted –
Secure in its branches the ring dove remain’d.
War-blasts have scatter’d it!
Rude Hands have shatter’d it!
Flown is the nestler that tenanted there.
Long from the pelting storm
None sought its blighted form,
Save the lone raven that scream’d in despair...⁶⁴

In its classical allusions and polite poetry, this ode represented a subset of patriotic performance taking place in what its auditors would have considered a refined setting. The patriotic ode could have come from the pages of one of Lowell Mason’s songbooks, but it is significant that a martial form like a march opened the concert.

Displays of strong emotions were a common feature of genteel concerts. Concert music encompassed sublimity and patriotic feeling. An 1810 concert in Baltimore to fund the new St. Augustine’s Church featured what was, for the time, a remarkably full band, as well as a choir and organ, playing a variety of music by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Pergolesi. A glowing review, probably penned by one of the concert’s promoters,

⁶⁴ The “raven” is likely a reference to a specific anti-war figure from Massachusetts, or possibly a personification of the region as a whole during the war. *Handel and Haydn Society*, “Select Oratorio...in Presence of James Monroe, President of the United States” (Boston, 1817).

emphasized both its refinement and the intense emotions associated with the music. The church was “filled with...an assemblage of taste and science, beauty and fashion.” The music produced “highly wrought fellings [*sic*],” in an audience “beaming with the intelligence of soul and cultivation of mind....It was singularly sublime and affecting.”⁶⁵ Patriotic celebrations tapped into the stirring atmosphere of concert music: for example, the 1811 celebration of Washington’s birthday in Baltimore included “an interval of appropriate [i.e. patriotic] music, from a band of amateurs, who patriotically aided the celebration with their superior talents.”⁶⁶ Concerts like these combined patriotic sentiment with the perception of sublime emotion.

In the West, Cincinnatians were quick to organize similar events. As early as 1819, the city’s Haydn Society was organizing concerts featuring the inevitable Handel and Haydn at the town’s Episcopal Church. But these concerts, led by a local dance instructor, also included a wide range of songs, opera arias, marches, waltzes, such as British popular songs alongside an instrumental trio by Ignaz Pleyel, or favorites like “The Soldier’s Bride” followed a “French air” and a song about William Tell.⁶⁷ The society also had access to new music: a concert the following year featured not only pieces by Handel and Haydn but also an anthem by the Baltimore-based composer Charles Meineke.⁶⁸ The Cincinnati Haydn Society’s concerts were demonstrations of the

⁶⁵ *Baltimore Federal Republican*, May 28, June 28, 1810.

⁶⁶ *Baltimore Federal Republican*, February 25, 1811.

⁶⁷ Harry R. Stevens, “Adventures in Refinement,” 8-22.

⁶⁸ *Western Spy and Literary Cadet*, April 29, 1820. Charles Meineke, variously known as Charles, Christopher, or Christian (not to mention Meineke and Meinecke) was a typical specimen of German émigré musician. He settled in Baltimore in 1800 as organist and choirmaster of St. Paul’s Church. He was a member of various musical societies over the years, including a short-lived Handel Society in 1803, the Baltimore Harmonists in 1820, and the Anacreontic Society mentioned in Chapter One. His compositions were widely known and respected: an 1822 review from the early musical magazine *The Euterpiad* lauded his music as “appealing to a higher class of musicians than are anywhere found in our country.” See J.

developing city's cultivation: as a reviewer wrote of one concert, it was "the strongest evidence we can adduce of our advancement in those embellishments which refine and harmonize society and give a zest to life."⁶⁹ These concerts selected from a shifting smorgasbord of styles and genres but retained a core of refinement, musical "science"—and edification.

Concert promoters in urban centers organized performances in a variety of places, integrating them into the daily entertainment life of the city. Three examples from 1816 to 1818 in Baltimore illustrate the ubiquity of concert activity in general-purpose venues that programmed national music alongside sacred music, European instrumental pieces, and popular song. The three concerts, in spring, summer, and fall, featured different combinations of instruments, including one on "that much admired and fashionable instrument, the GRAND PEDAL HARP."⁷⁰ One was heavily tilted toward the "national music" of Scotland and Ireland, with selections from Moore's *Irish Melodies* and martial Scottish tunes like "The Pibroch add [*sic*] Scotch Airs on the Highland or Military Bagpipes."⁷¹ The other two advertised American patriotic songs, like "New National Songs never performed [such as] Here's Columbia forever."⁷² They took place in "Mr. Gibney's Assembly Room" and "Mr. Duclairacq's Ball Room." Concerts like this drew together the supposedly refined, if temporary, space of concerts with day-to-day patriotic performance.

Bunker Clark and David Hildebrand, "Meineke, Christopher," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed December 14, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46884>; Keefer, *Baltimore's Music*, 62-63, 66-70; Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 673.

⁶⁹ Osborne, *Music in Ohio*, 23.

⁷⁰ *Baltimore Patriot*, July 24, 1816.

⁷¹ *Baltimore Patriot*, March 4, 1818.

⁷² *Baltimore Patriot*, November 29, 1817.

The long-forgotten performers who promoted and starred in these concerts were commercial actors, putting together programs of music including national songs in hopes of a large crowd and a sizable profit, though perhaps corresponding to their own patriotic sentiment. Ticket sales described a local urban web of musical commerce: one could buy a ticket for the three Baltimore concerts from 1816-1818 at “Mr. Carr’s Music Store,” “Mr. Robinson’s Circulating Library,” “Mr. Lucas’s Book Store,” or at the home of Mr. Clifton, who arranged and performed in the November 29, 1817 concert. Promoters followed up live performances by advertising printed music tied to concerts, available at local shops. For example, the Baltimore print shop of Warner & Hanna, dealing in maps, almanacs, and a wide variety of other printed material, advertised “The Comic Songster” in 1811, “being a collection of the most Admired Songs sung at the Theatres & Concert Rooms, and a number of *New National Songs*.”⁷³ Music printers hoped to capitalize on well-attended concerts by selling songsters, sheet music, and broadsides locally.

Commerce linked printed music to live performance across regions, bringing patriotic music and new kinds of “national” music west to frontier towns like Cincinnati. The fledgling Haydn Society, which appeared and quickly vanished after two or three seasons around 1820, highlighted such a program in March 1820. Besides an overture by the “full band,” it was largely a series of popular “national” tunes, including a hymn from Germany, a ballad by Thomas Moore, a “Hungarian air,” and “Scots Wha’ Hae.”⁷⁴ A

⁷³ The national songs included “Decatur’s Victory,” “Rise Columbia,” and “The American Star.” *Baltimore Federal Republican*, May 31, 1811.

⁷⁴ This last is listed as composed by John Braham, which is confusing. Braham, a British tenor, was at the height of his transatlantic fame at the time and thus the Haydn Society would want to take advantage of his popularity in their program. The Scotch anthem, which depicts the legendary oration of Robert the Bruce to his army in 1314 at the Battle of Bannockburn, was actually written by Robert Burns to a traditional tune and published in 1793; it was apparently premiered by John Braham. Adding to the confusion, a subsequent concert by the Haydn Society gives a short description of the piece—listing it as an “Address to his

one-off concert later that year at the Cincinnati Hotel featured both the popular martial overture *The Battle of Prague* and, more significant, the first recorded performance of “The Star Spangled Banner” in Cincinnati—“by desire,” according to the ad, implying that the song was already familiar in town.⁷⁵ “The Marseillaise,” a song with connotations of both French character and American patriotism, remained popular, appearing on an 1824 concert program in Cincinnati.⁷⁶

Outdoor pleasure gardens were a popular spot for concertizing, reaching their height of popularity around the turn of the nineteenth century and for several decades after. Programs for outdoor concerts did not differ greatly from those in more formal indoor spaces, with one exception: it was easier to use brass-heavy instrumentation and, most notably, fireworks and illuminations outside.⁷⁷ A series of concerts in 1816 and 1817 in Boston’s Vauxhall Garden illustrates their colorful and patriotic character. Organizers described the fireworks for an August 1816 concert in great detail: “rockets,” “wheels,” and even a salute of cannon fire recalling the late war and possibly the attack on Fort McHenry specifically. Each firework was accompanied by music, much of it martial or specifically patriotic, including “Washington’s March,” “Hull’s March,” the much-loved “Battle of Prague,” and various national pieces. The patriotic topper was a “fine Transparency...placed in the centre walk...being the full length figure of the immortal Washington.” The martial music advertised at all of these concerts was likely

army”—but for some reason lists the legendary figure as “Mr. Warren Bruce.” See Stevens, *Adventures in Refinement*, 13-15; *Edinburgh Dramatic Review*, October 23 1822, 58.

⁷⁵ *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, December 9, 1820. Harry R. Stevens notes that these concerts from approximately 1819 to 1824 show little difference from similar performances in larger eastern urban centers. See Stevens, “Adventures in Refinement,” 16-17, 28.

⁷⁶ *Cincinnati Literary Gazette*, Jan 17, 1824, 21; Harry R. Stevens, “Further Adventures in Refinement: Early Concert Life in Cincinnati,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 5 (December 1947): 25.

⁷⁷ See Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, 118-157.

provided by one or more than one local militia band in addition to the traveling theatrical troupe of Mr. and Mrs. Burke, Mrs. Burke being typically the prime vocal attraction.⁷⁸

Garden concerts were replicated in other cities as well, the Fourth of July not surprisingly being a prime date for such spectacles. A July 4th concert at New York's Vauxhall Garden in 1830 displayed every type of patriotic symbol imaginable, from the flag to an intricate illumination encompassing the names of all the states in the union to a "Grand Naval and Military Column...on which are registered the names of AMERICAN HEROES."⁷⁹ The fireworks in particular were advertised in highly symbolic terms: the concluding "Coup de Feu" was "intended as allegorical of the Declaration of Independence." The music, provided by the "Grad Military Band of the 9th Regiment, in full Uniform," included a fantasy on the by-now favorite "Star Spangled Banner." By 1830, musical performance had helped to create the "national music" that commentators had been pondering for decades. Audiences, it seemed, found the existence of a specifically American music less problematic than did tastemakers.⁸⁰

The discourses of "national music" and cultivated music became inseparable with the superstar performers that flooded American performance spaces beginning in the

⁷⁸ Mrs. Burke, a "young and very pretty actress and singer," was a progenitor of later female vocal stars like Maria Malibran and Jenny Lind. Her given name has not come down to us; she was inevitably known as simply "Mrs. Burke" or "Mrs. Thomas Burke." The Burkes' troupe toured extensively in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. See Francis C. Wemyss, *Chronology of the American Stage*, 25-26; Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage*, 200; Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South*, 15 (quote). For the Boston Vauxhall Concert, see *Boston Gazette*, August 19, 1816. See also *Boston Daily Advertiser* August 19, 1816 and September 22, 1817; *Boston Gazette* June 2, 16, July 25, 29, and September 11, 1817.

⁷⁹ *New York Columbian*, June 30, 1830.

⁸⁰ Ibid. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston all had separate Vauxhall Gardens named after the London original during this period when the popularity of the pleasure garden was at a height. See Rachel Cowgill, "Performance Alfresco: Music-Making in London's Pleasure Gardens," in Jonathan Conlin, ed., *The Pleasure Garden, From Vauxhall to Coney Island* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 100-126; Joseph Jackson, "Vauxhall Garden," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 57, no. 4 (1933): 289-298; Geraldine A. Duclow, "Philadelphia's Early Pleasure Gardens," in Stephen M. Vallillo and Maryann Chach, eds., *Pleasure Gardens* (New York: Theatre Library Association, 1998), chap. 1.

mid-nineteenth century: Ole Bull, Henri Vieuxtemps, Jenny Lind, Anton Rubinstein, and many others. Ole Bull was as popular for his virtuoso arrangement of “Yankee Doodle” as he was for “new” Americana like “Niagara.” The 1853-1854 American tour of French conductor Louise-Antoine Jullien represents how the complexity of this discourse was transformed into unabashedly patriotic performance. Jullien’s orchestra relied on its conductor’s mastery of dance forms, specifically the quadrille, and, like Ole Bull, patriotic showstoppers—especially his “American Quadrille.” But it was also a paragon of instrumental virtuosity and orchestral color. Not surprisingly, J.S. Dwight’s reaction to the Jullien orchestra was puzzlement at such refined musicality in the service of what he regarded as common tunes. Jullien’s “hacknied selection” of popular and patriotic songs was relieved only temporarily by snippets from Beethoven and Mendelssohn; yet at the same time “there was the rich, vivid...collective orchestral sound” and the ensemble’s “wonderfully perfect precision.”⁸¹ Still, Dwight wanted more from the Frenchman:

Jullien’s quadrilles and polkas and arrangements are infinitely clever...but if one chances to want more than amusement, if the soul craves to be fed, and filled, and restored to its native purer atmosphere, these things grow feebler and feebler by repetition.⁸²

Dwight took solace in the orchestra’s edifying role; the “powers and glories of a mighty orchestra...educat[ed] the *musical* sense by the most rapid process.”⁸³ Dwight’s finely tuned perceptions of musical refinement found it difficult to reconcile programs that were so complex and simple at the same time: refined talent that played Beethoven, patriotic airs, and minstrel tunes all to rapturous applause.

Audiences seemed to understand the import of such programs implicitly, and,

⁸¹ “Jullien and his Orchestra,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, April 29, 1854, 46. As was usual, no author is listed for this editorial but there is little doubt it was written by Dwight himself.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

they showed their pleasure. The “American Quadrille” seemed to be universally popular: it was inevitably followed by “a scene of the wildest enthusiasm...The ladies in the audience wave their handkerchiefs and the gentlemen swing their hats and shout and stamp ‘till it is repeated.”⁸⁴ Sheet music editions with colorful patriotic iconography quickly followed (see Figure 3.3). The music of the quadrille, a dance that experienced a vogue in both Europe and America at mid-century, was eminently suitable for patriotic purposes: it was insistently rhythmic and fast-paced, usually played at a fast marching tempo like 2/4 (as the quickstep). Jullien’s “American Quadrille” was no different. He also added a fascinating finale that included a rousing rendition of “Yankee Doodle” and that draws the home performer through a battle sequence, complete with instrumental cues that might exist on the battlefield itself, like a fanfare for “Trumpets” (see Figure 3.4).⁸⁵

The success of the “American Quadrille” prompted a string of other such potpourris. Notably, Jullien’s original piece contained not only obviously patriotic tunes like “Hail to the Chief” and its rousing rendition of “Yankee Doodle,” but also Stephen Foster’s “Old Folks at Home.” Further examples, like his “American Polka,” also contained much popular music, including minstrel tunes like “Old Dan Tucker” and “Lucy Neal.”⁸⁶ Patriotic music was, perhaps, whatever stirred the blood, and this new American “national music” merged in these polyglot venues and performances. Another

⁸⁴ C.M. Cady, *Musical Review and Choral Advocate*, October 1853, 154; quoted in George C. Foreman, “The Remarkable Monsieur Jullien and His Grand American Tour,” in *Wind Band Activity in and Around New York ca. 1830-1950*, eds. Frank J. Cipolla and Donald Hunsberger (New York: Alfred Music 2005), 10.

⁸⁵ “Jullien’s American Quadrille,” (New York, 1853), Box 14, Item 31, Levy Collection; Andrew Lamb, “Quadrille,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press. Web. 21 Dec. 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22622>.

⁸⁶ Foreman, “The Remarkable Monsieur Jullien,” 10.

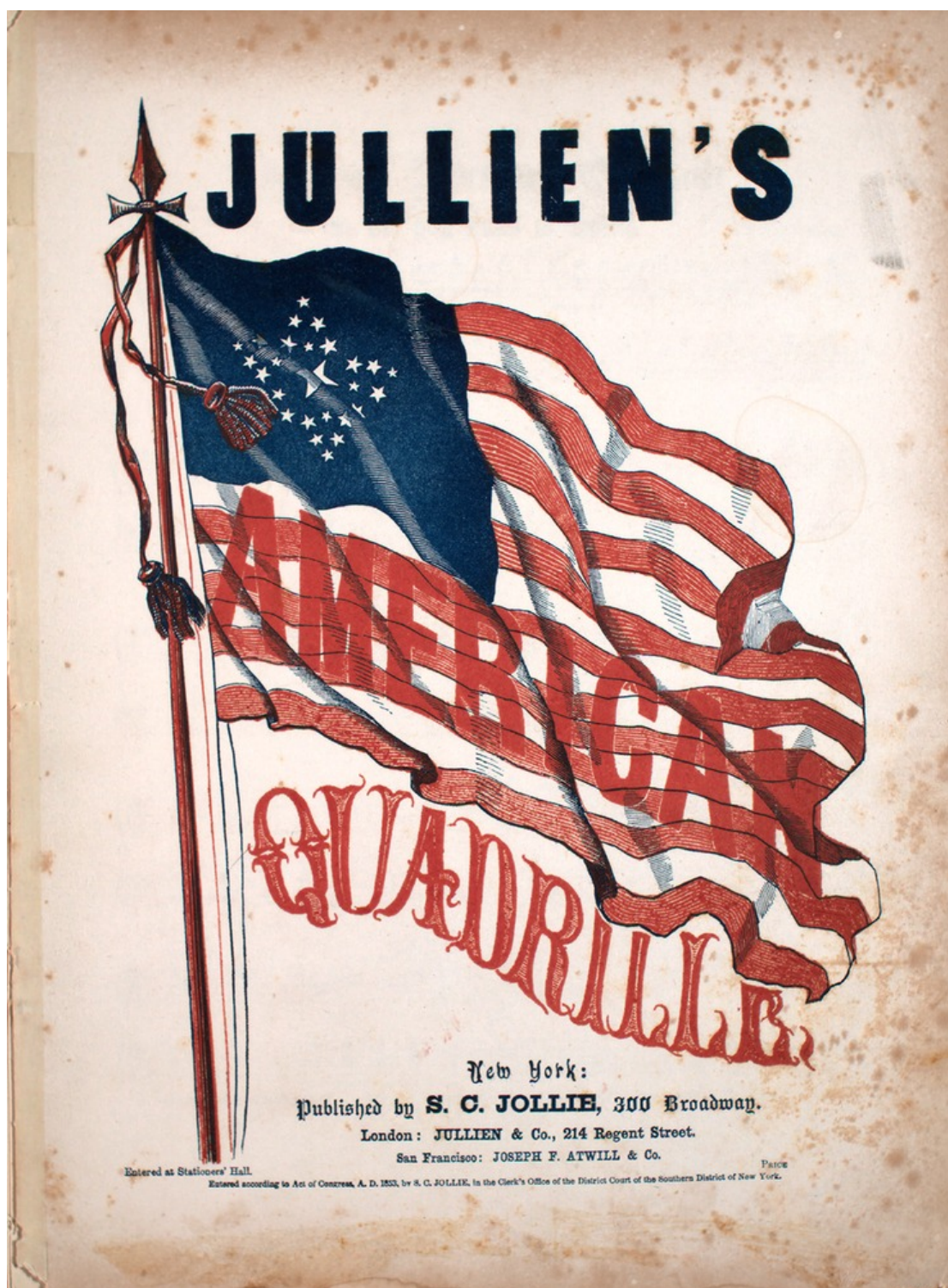


Figure 3.3. Louis-Antoine Jullien, Sheet Music for “American Quadrille,” sheet music cover (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853). Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

The image displays a musical score for a piano and trumpet arrangement of a "Yankee Doodle" variation. The score is organized into five systems, each with a piano part on the left and a trumpet part on the right. The piano part is written in treble and bass clefs, while the trumpet part is in treble clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4.

The first system is titled "ARMY ADVANCING." and includes dynamic markings *pp* and *ped.* The second system is titled "THE BATTLE." and includes the marking *cres.* The third system includes the markings *cen* and *do. f*. The fourth system includes the marking *cres.* The fifth system includes the marking *fff* and the title "TRUMPETS." at the end.

Figure 3.4. Jullien, "*American Quadrille*," "Yankee Doodle" variation (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853). Note descriptions like "Army Advancing" and "The Battle" tying specific sections to an imagined battle narrative.

theme with a national valence characterized music in the nineteenth century: picaresque songs of the West. They too became part of the multifaceted construction and reception of what could be taken broadly as authentically American music.

Discourses of the West: Tosso "The Arkansaw Traveler," and the Picaresque

The founding and rapid growth of Cincinnati occasioned a great deal of spirited civic boosterism. Primarily aimed at advancing the prospects of the Queen City of the West itself, boosterism also naturally encompassed the surrounding territory at different physical removes, so that it variously described the advantages of Cincinnati itself in its vale of seven hills, the Miami country (drained by the Great and Little Miami Rivers), the state of Ohio, the Ohio River Valley, the Mississippi Valley, and indeed even the entire Union west of the Alleghanies. Its boundaries were in fact not strictly reliant on physical geography but rather on the scope of the author's imagination. It was a discursive and rhetorical territory less clearly bounded than the Old West of postbellum and twentieth century America. It was, as it were, not-East.⁸⁷

Mirroring the Janus-faced musical discourse of tasteful cultivation and emotional "national music," this discursive West was characterized by stern, hard-nosed industry on one hand and colorful whimsy on the other. Within a couple of decades of the founding of Fort Washington, Westerners who settled in and around Cincinnati were pushing its commercial advantages in moral terms. Dr. Daniel Drake, probably the foremost civic leader in the young city before 1850, summed up this character in 1815: "the people of

⁸⁷ Matthew Rebirthorn, *Pioneer Performances: Staging the Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-70; Malcolm J. Rohrbaugh, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).

the Miami country, may in part be characterised, as industrious, frugal, temperate, patriotic and religious; with as much intelligence, and more enterprise, than the families from which they were detached [i.e. in the East].”⁸⁸ Drake’s case had remarkable staying power. In 1841, a booster predicted that by the year 2000, Cincinnati would be the “greatest city in the world.” He relied on a similar moral proposition: the West in general was “peopled and peopling by the most active and enterprising, and, in some respects, intelligent population on the globe.”⁸⁹

The growth of the West became linked over time with American identity itself. To be a national patriot was to display “the noblest of civic duties,” and was only strengthened by “the sentiment of affection for our own [Western] land.”⁹⁰ “National character,” said Daniel Drake, was shaped by the West because it “exert[s] on the mind that expanding influence, which comes from the contemplation of vast natural objects”—a Western sublime.⁹¹ Moreover, the sublime wilderness would be over time transformed into refined society. A eulogy of Drake reflected the perception of transformation and its meaning for the entire country:

His own country [i.e. the United States] has risen from an humble and feeble republic to the most exalted position that any government or people can occupy. The West, the more immediate theatre of his own fame and usefulness, has been transformed from a wilderness...into a smiling and luxuriant garden...teeming with the arts, and luxuries, and refinements of civilized life.⁹²

⁸⁸ Daniel Drake, *Natural and Statistical View*, 166.

⁸⁹ Charles Cist, *Cincinnati in 1841: Its Early Annals and Future Prospects* (Cincinnati: Printed and published for the author, 1841), 275, 285.

⁹⁰ Mansfield, *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Dr. Daniel Drake, M.D.*, 306. See also, “On Western Character,” *The Western Monthly Magazine*, February, 1833, 49-54.

⁹¹ Daniel Drake, *Discourse on the History, Character, and Prospects of the West: Delivered to the Union Literary Society of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio* (Cincinnati: Truman and Smith, 1834), Cincinnati History Library, R.B. 977 D761D, 7-8.

⁹² Samuel D. Gross, *A Discourse on the life, character, and services of Daniel Drake, M.D.* (Louisville: Printed at the office of the *Louisville Journal*, 1853), 91.

Just as the project of refinement in the “old” East saw the nation in terms of progression from one stage of civilization to another, Drake and his peers charted the transformation of the West, which was much more dramatic: from wilderness to refinement in one or two generations. Noah Ludlow, actor, theater manager, sometime partner and eventual rival of Sol Smith, applied this same transformation to the theater, where the “pioneers of the Drama serve to mark the progress of civilization and refinement.”⁹³ Edification was as central to Drake’s program as it was for Lowell Mason, except that, so Drake thought, the West provided the ideal arena for learning. True, eastern children, surrounded by the “inventive genius of civilization,” “acquire[d] a copious and varied learning,” but also suffered from “conformity.” The advantage of the West lay in its potential to fuel “curiosity” and “observation,” so that young people were “supplied with fresh materials of thought, instead of ruminating on the old.”⁹⁴ The West, as it marched toward refinement, had unique advantages.

Furthermore, according to Drake and his ilk, the special qualities of the Western regional character were entirely compatible with patriotic attachment to the nation. Drake, by training a medical doctor, was also a literary man, and he identified Western literature with patriotic sentiment:

Our literature cannot fail to be patriotic, and its patriotism will be American....To feel in his heart, and infuse into his writings, the inspiration of such a patriotism, the scholar must feast his taste on the delicacies of our scenery, and dwell with enthusiasm on the genius of our constitution and laws....A literature, animated with this patriotism, is a national blessing, and such must be the literature of the West.⁹⁵

⁹³ Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It*, 2.

⁹⁴ Drake, Discourse, 6-8.

⁹⁵ Drake, Discourse, 40.

A distinctive Western art rooted in the region's landscape embraced and enhanced love of country: the West was the exemplar of patriotism. Was it "consistent with the peace and perpetuity of the UNION, to inculcate a devotion to one of its parts?" asked Drake.

Emphatically yes:

...a devotion to the WEST, is manifestly compatible with both, and indeed the most efficient means of promoting both. This results from the geographical relations between the Valley of the Mississippi and the Atlantic states; relations, which being founded on nature, cannot be dissolved by the hand of art, but are daily acquiring new strength...⁹⁶

Commercial and geographic ties made Western qualities part of the nation as a whole, and love of country bound section to whole. The West, by nature and nurture, was quintessentially American.

The striving character of the West was encapsulated in a picaresque literary and musical character, but the Western picaro had an Eastern forebear: the dour, salt-of-the-earth Yankee peddler of turn-of-the-century literature, notably a central figure in the first significant American play, Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*. The Yankee was represented musically in "Corn Cob Twist Your Hair," a popular song set to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Such archetypal figures—the Yankee, mythic Western and Southwestern backwoodsmen like Davy Crockett or Mike Fink, or the characters of blackface minstrelsy such as Jim Crow and Zip Coon—combined supposed regional characteristics with nationalist feeling, in the process capturing the imagination of the entire country.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Drake, *Discourse*, 6.

⁹⁷ Joan Shelley Rubin, *Constance Rourke and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 51-52; Cynthia A. Kierner, ed., *The Contrast: Manners, Morals, and Authority in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 22; Roarke, *American Humor*, 15-36; Ed Piancentino, ed., *C.M. Haile's "Pardon Jones" Letters: Old Southwest Humor from Antebellum Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 6-16.

Like the Yankee, the Western picaro was both subversive and authentically American. These American picaros followed a classic script: their adventures were autobiographical and episodic, they came from lowly or obscure backgrounds, and they offered trenchant commentary on society and manners. The picaro “lived by his wits through trickery.”⁹⁸ No better example exists than our old friend Sol Smith, who chronicled his roguish exploits in Western theater in humorous detail. On his way with a theatrical troupe to Kentucky in 1826, Smith got one over on the citizens of the river town of Gallipolis:

...we intended to give a concert, but the people all mistook me for a *preacher*...every thing indicated that I was mistaken for one of those godly individuals who perambulate the country converting sinners, and eating the best the land affords. I thought it a pity to undeceive our entertainers [i.e. hosts]. If they chose to deceive themselves, why should I say any thing that would take away from their satisfaction? In the morning I offered to pay my bill, but not a cent would the landlord receive. So we departed, without saying a word about the concert.⁹⁹

Smith traveled on to Cincinnati in true picaresque fashion, “without a dollar in my pocket.”¹⁰⁰ His memoirs are full of portrayals of colorful regional characters, such as the inimitable and peripatetic Monsieur Matthieu (see Figure 3.5), emigrant, farmer, and musician: “‘Sacre! I plant la pomme de terre [potatoes] – he no grow in five months; I make engagement to play de feedle – I get no pay! Begar [by God], I sal take up my bed and promenade – dam if I don’t!’ and, sure enough, he put off for Texas!”¹⁰¹ The character of Matthieu embodies and caricatures the roguish traveler who, having been

⁹⁸ A. Owen Aldridge, “Fenimore Cooper and the Picaresque Tradition,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 27, no. 3 (Dec., 1972): 284.

⁹⁹ Sol Smith, *Theatrical Apprenticeship*, 117-118.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Theatrical Apprenticeship*, 118.

¹⁰¹ Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South*, 173-174. Another well-known example of this trope is the “Pardon Jones” letters, written by C.M. Haile, a transplant from New England to New Orleans. See Ed Placentino, ed., *C.M. Haile’s ‘Pardon Jones’ Letters*.



MONSIEUR MATTHIEU LEADING A SMALL ORCHESTRA. (See page 173.)

gagement to play de feedle—I get no pay! Begar, I sal take up my bed and promenade—dam if I don't!" and, sure enough, he put off for Texas!

One morning in the winter of 1843, a card was brought to me in the director's room of the St. Charles's Theatre on which was written the name of the veritable Mons. Matthieu! I directed that he should be instantly shown up. On entering the room, he jumped so high that I was doubtful whether he would ever come down again.

"Ah ha! Monsieur Sol, I am too happy I see you again! Ah ha! you got one splendid theatre; I sal make application to be your leader, *tout de suite*, directly."

"Sit down, my old friend, and compose yourself. Where have you hid yourself for the last seven years?"

"Hid myself? I have been at Tex-ass, by gar. I fight some battel at St. Jacinto; I get so mush land as I can not *find*; I almost starve my family in that glorious country; and I come back to follow my profession in dis city for some bread to eat."

After some conversation, I asked him what he was doing in New Orleans.

"Doing? what I do here? I am at present leading for Mr. Adams, the conjuror," he replied.

"Leading?"

"Yes, leading the orchestra." He was the sole musician!

I have not seen the monsieur since. There was but little left of him; a strong wind would find no difficulty in blowing him away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE St. Louis Theatre was sold this spring (1843) under a deed of trust given by the stockholders to secure a loan of \$20,000. It was bought in by Mr. George Collier, of whom we afterward rented it. The original cost of the lot and building was \$78,000, and it was never finished.

The season opened May 20th, with Yankee Hill as the star, to a house of \$157 75. Joe Kirby and Ben De Bar played brief engagements, and then came the English lecturer Dr.

Figure 3.5. "Monsieur Matthieu leading a small orchestra." Illustration from Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868).

himself bamboozled, freely pulls up stakes and moves on to the next venture. His bluff freedom and physical mobility was essential to the Western picaresque. Popular music reflected this.

One of the first musical expressions of the Western character was “Hunters of Kentucky,” composed to celebrate the victory of Andrew Jackson’s army over the British in the Battle of New Orleans (see Figure 3.6).¹⁰² The song idealized the “half horse, half alligator” character of the Kentucky rifleman (and by extension Jackson himself).¹⁰³ It became a campaign song for Jackson, but in its first incarnation it was a popular patriotic sensation recalling the late war. Noah Ludlow claimed its premiere in 1821:

As soon as the comedy of the night was over, I dressed myself in a buckskin hunting-shirt and leggins, which I had borrowed of a river man, and with *moccasins* on my feet, and an old slouched hat on my head, and a rifle on my shoulder, I presented myself before the audience....As I delivered the last five words, I took my old hat off my head, threw it upon the ground, and brought my rifle to the position of taking aim. At that instant came a shout and an Indian yell from the inmates of the pit, and a tremendous applause from other portions of the house, the whole lasting for nearly a minute....I had to sing the song three times that night before they would let me off.¹⁰⁴

Sol Smith claimed to have sung “Hunters of Kentucky” for forty one nights straight at one engagement; the song was well enough known that when he forgot part of the lyric, he was “prompted from the boxes!”¹⁰⁵ According to these anecdotes, “Hunters of Kentucky” and its hardy frontiersmen were popular among the “inmates of the pit,” but also appealed to the more refined denizens of the boxes. “Hunters of Kentucky” incorporated the Western backwoodsman and picaro into its vivid portrayal of martial

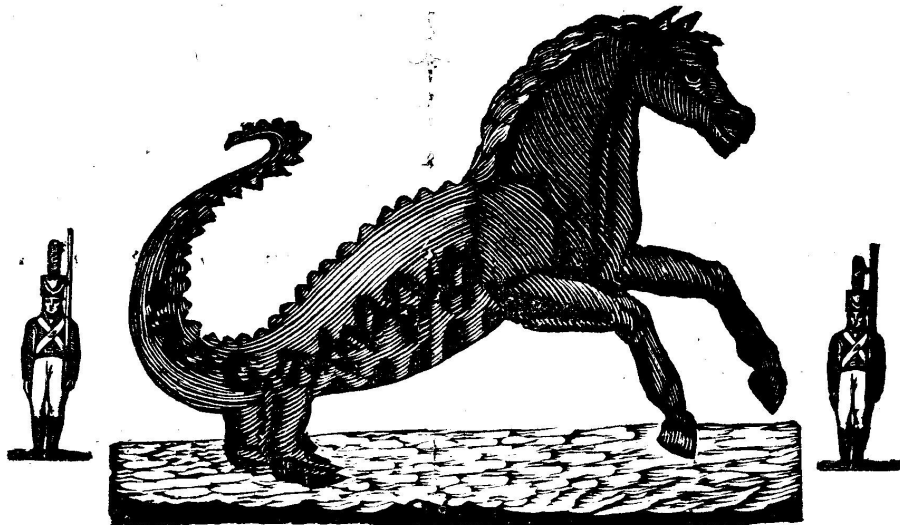
¹⁰² “Hunters of Kentucky,” ca. 1815, Special Collections, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁰³ Ironically, the celebration of the fabled Kentucky rifleman was inaccurate; the Kentucky militia at the Battle of New Orleans were largely ineffectual and the battle in fact was won by the American artillery. See Donald Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, 221; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It*, 238.

¹⁰⁵ Sol Smith, *Theatrical Apprenticeship*, 96.

Hunters of Kentucky, or Half HORSE AND HALF ALLIGATOR.



YE gentlemen and ladies fair,
Who grace this famous city,
Just listen if you've time to spare,
While I rehearse a ditty;
And for the opportunity
Conceive yourselves quite lucky,
For 'tis not often that you see
A hunter from Kentucky.
Oh Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!
Oh Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!

We are a hardy, free-born race,
Each man to fear a stranger;
Whate'er the game we join in chase,
Despoiling time and danger
And if a daring foe annoys,
Whate'er his strength and forces,
We'll show him that Kentucky boys
Are alligator horses.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

I s'pose you've read it in the prints,
How Packenham attempted
To make old Hickory Jackson wince,
But soon his scheme repented;
For we, with rifles ready cock'd,
Thought such occasion lucky,
And soon around the gen'ral flock'd
The hunters of Kentucky.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

You've heard, I s'pose how New-Orleans
Is fam'd for wealth and beauty,
There's girls of ev'ry hue it seems,
From snow-white to sooty,
So Packenham he made his brags,
If he in fight was lucky,
He'd have their girls and cotton bags,
In spite of old Kentucky.

565

Oh Kentucky, &c.

But Jackson he was wide awake,
And was not scar'd at trifles,
For well he knew what aim we take
With our Kentucky rifles.
So he led us down to Cypress swamp,
The ground was low and mucky,
There stood John Bull in martial pomp
And here was old Kentucky.
Oh Kentucky, &c.

A bank was rais'd to hide our breasts,
Not that we thought of dying,
But that we always like to rest,
Unless the game is flying.
Behind it stood our little force,
None wished it to be greater,
For ev'ry man was half a horse,
And half an alligator.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

They did not let our patience tire,
Before they show'd their faces;
We did not choose to waste our fire,
So snugly kept our places.
But when so near we saw them wink,
We thought it time to stop 'em,
And 'twould have done you good I think,
To see Kentuckians drop 'em.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

They found, at last, 'twas vain to fight,
Where lead was all the booty,
And so they wisely took to flight,
And left us all our beauty.
And now, if danger e'er annoys,
Remember what our trade is,
Just send for us Kentucky boys,
And we'll protect ye, ladies.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

Sold wholesale & retail by William Rutter, No. 1, Snow's Wharf, Boston.

Figure 3.6. "Hunters of Kentucky," (Boston, broadside, ca. 1815). American Song Sheets, Rare Books and Special Collections, Library of Congress.

victory at New Orleans, and thence into nationally popular patriotic music.

One now-forgotten musician from Cincinnati joined the trope of the Western picaresque to cultural ideals of cultivation and refinement, and in the process created an exemplar of one kind of national music. Joseph Tosso was born Jose Anguel Augustin in Mexico City in 1802 to Spanish parents, received his musical education (his primary instrument was the violin) at the Paris *Conservatoire*, and traveled extensively in the United States. He performed with his father, a talented amateur violinist, for several years in Baltimore's theaters and concert venues before moving west, where he worked and concertized for brief periods in New Orleans and Louisville before settling permanently in Cincinnati.¹⁰⁶ In the Queen City, he was involved in musical activity across the spectrum of genres and spaces. He sold pianos out of his residence and operated music and dancing schools with a succession of partners as dancing masters. In 1830, the school of Tosso and a Mr. Pius occupied space in Frances Trollope's multi-use Bazaar, where they trumpeted that building's recent renovation in the hope that it would "afford them a fair patronage, and give them an opportunity of testing their capacity for imparting instruction, and for extending the field of elegant and refined amusement."¹⁰⁷ His concertizing led to comparisons to Ole Bull and Henri Vieuxtemps; said one memoirist, "I have seen him stand on the platform at a concert in [a] large church without any

¹⁰⁶ Ophia D. Smith, "Joseph Tosso, The Arkansaw Traveler," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (January 1974): 17-23. See also Ophia D. Smith Collection, Smith Library of Regional History, Lane Public Libraries, Oxford OH; W.H. Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley: Historical and Biographical Sketches* (Cincinnati: R. Clarke, 1891), 356.

¹⁰⁷ Alice Hambleton, compiler, *The Trollope Family, the Bazaar, and Mr. Hervieu, quotations from the Cincinnati Gazette, March 3, 1828-November 30, 1830*, MssVF 2570, Cincinnati History Library, Cincinnati, Ohio; Smith, "Joseph Tosso," 24; Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, 919-920. The Bazaar was a locally infamous white elephant, erected by the visiting Mrs. Trollope (who famously denigrated the society of almost every American stop she made), while living in Cincinnati for several years. Its opulence exceeded its funding and it changed hands and was rebuilt several times. See Greve, 552.

accompaniment and fill the whole building.”¹⁰⁸ Such paeans were common. It is no exaggeration to say that Joseph Tosso was the center of refined musical life in Cincinnati for several decades.¹⁰⁹

However, Tosso was equally well-known as the personification of a Western trope: “The Arkansaw Traveler.” He performed with equal facility the virtuoso soloist, the elegant bandleader at a ball, and the jocose characterization of a Western trickster. The origin of “The Arkansaw Traveler” is uncertain, but Tosso made the character his own.¹¹⁰ “The Arkansaw Traveler” is a performance as much as it is a song; in it, a traveler (“an Eastern man”) stops in front of a humble shack where a man sits out front playing a violin; the old man, possibly a squatter, has heard a new song on a trip to New Orleans and is trying to reproduce it. He has succeeded with the first part but cannot get the second quite right. The song consists of a comic dialog between the two, interspersed with music (see Figure 3.7). There are many different versions of the dialog, but all are similar in that the roguish Arkansan continually misinterprets the traveler’s questions. For example:

S[tranger]: Give me some satisfaction if you please sir, where does this road go to?

O[ld] M[an]: Well it hain’t moved a step since I’ve been here.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, January 17, 1887.

¹⁰⁹ See for example “Eighty Three: Reminiscences of a Famous Old Musician...,” *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, April 26, 1885; *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, June 13, 1885; *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, May 15, 1880.

¹¹⁰ Tosso claimed authorship of the tune, but this is disputed. See Smith, Joseph Tosso,” 32; Elizabeth Baer, “Music: An Integral Part of Life in Ohio 1800-1860,” *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 14 (July 1956): 200; Clifton Johnson, “Traveling in ‘Arkansaw,’” *The Outing Magazine* 47 no. 1 (Oct 1905): 76.

¹¹¹ “The Arkansaw Traveler” has survived to the present and is readily familiar as the nursery tune “I’m bringing home a baby bumble bee,” and through Warner Brothers cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s. A version by Pete Seeger can be heard at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJcMSmJaww4> (“Arkansas Traveler by Pete Seeger,” YouTube video, 2:37, posted by “thewhitestripes93,” February 22, 2014). Seeger’s version is performed on the banjo instead of the violin, but has the advantage of replicating the original’s comic dialog. For a version featuring period instruments and performance practice, the 2nd South

3

THE ARKANSAS TRAVELER.

.....

This piece is intended to represent an Eastern man's experience among the inhabitants of Arkansas, showing their hospitality and the mode of obtaining it.

Several years since he was traveling the State to Little Rock, the Capitol;—in those days Rail Roads had not been heard of and the Stage Lines were very limited, so under the circumstances, he was obliged to travel the whole distance on foot. One evening about dusk he came across a small log house standing fifteen or twenty yards from the road and enclosed by a low rail fence, of the most primitive description. In the door sat a man playing a Violin, the tune was the, then, most popular tune in that region, namely; the "Arkansas Traveler."

He kept repeating the first part of the tune over and over again, as he could not play the second part. At the time the traveler reached the house it was raining very hard, and he was anxious to obtain shelter from the storm,—the house looked any thing but a shelter, as it was covered with clapboards and the rain was leaking into every part of it. The old man's daughter Sarah appeared to be getting supper, while a small boy was setting the table and the old lady sat in the door near her husband, admiring the music.

The Stranger on coming up, said:— How do you do?—the man merely glanced at him and continuing to play, said:— I do as I please.

Stranger.— How long have you been living here? *S.*— How long will it take me to get to the next Tavern?

Old Man.— D'ye see that mountain there?—well that was there when I come here. *O.M.*— Well you'll not get thar at all if you stand thar foolin with me all night.

S.— Can I stay here to night? *(plays)*

O.M.— No! ye can't stay here.

S.— Well how fard do you call it to the next Tavern? *O.M.*— I reckon its upwards of some distance.

Figure 3.7. Sheet music for "The Arkansas Traveler," n.d. Note the scene-setting prologue, perhaps intended to be read by the home performer.

Carolina String Band's performance is excellent: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACrwwCKVXxo> ("2nd South Carolina String Band – The Arkansas Traveler," YouTube video, 3:17, posted by "Duelingbanjos123," September 24, 2012). Finally, for unbeatable fiddle virtuosity and improvisation, listen to Mark O'Connor and guests in a gala performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOwTlkuTBhs> ("Mark O'Connor with Heroes – Arkansas Traveler," YouTube video, 4:57, posted by "Jw Stockman," September 2, 2013). Doug Kershaw performs in the style of a nineteenth-century fiddler, with the instrument floating low against his shoulder instead of tucked under his chin.

The old man's goal in most versions is to trick the visitor into teaching him the second part of the tune: when the Easterner finally plays it, the old man becomes suddenly friendly and invites the stranger in. The song portrays the Westerner as a trickster who, in the end, gets one over on his visitor.

A recollection of a citizen of Salem in northeast Ohio of one performance of "The Arkansaw Traveler" paints as detailed a portrait of mid-nineteenth century small town performance practice as exists. It deserves to be quoted at length:

The chief attraction in early times at the 'Golden Fleece' [tavern] was the music, the *chef d'oeuvre* of which was considered to be the "Arkansas Traveller." The residents always kept their attention upon any night when it was likely this play would be enacted....the big table which stood against the wall brought out into the center of the room, and one of the boys...mounted thereon...and commenced to play the first part of the tune. After playing it once or twice to familiarize the new members of his audience, he prefaced the performance with an explanation, a sort of prologue...[He then played the tune] in different keys and to different time; improvising right and left in it, playing it high and low...but the last part of the tune continually evaded him. While thus engaged, his brother would enter the room dressed in the guise of a Traveller, and make his way up to the front part of the circle around the player....It was largely a matter of improvisation, depending upon the skill and ability of the players, the humor they were in, the time at their command, and the extent to which the audience could arouse the enthusiasm of the players.¹¹²

The Golden Fleece was an improvised, intimate performance venue. A table provided a rough stage: dragged out into the center of the tavern, it turned the audience into active participants in the story of the Arkansaw Traveler. A successful performance depended on the onlookers "arous[ing] the enthusiasm" of the two players in the middle of the room. The song and its characters were familiar and eagerly anticipated by the townsfolk: "if it should get out...that [the song] was to be given, that night would surely see the old

¹¹² Thomas Wilson, "The Arkansas Traveller," *Ohio History Journal* 8, no. 3 (January, 1900): 296-308.

bar-room packed to the utmost.”¹¹³ Performances like this one established the Arkansaw Traveler as a distinct character and wove his song into the fabric of local musical culture.

Performance made the discourse of “national music” meaningful. Whether it was a pair of fiddlers in an Ohio tavern, Ole Bull premiering a tone poem about Niagara Falls, a singing school with one of Lowell Mason’s tunes about national virtues in hand, or Joseph Tosso playing national songs at a refined concert, performance linked ideas about national music and its relation to feeling to local expressions of nationalist sentiment in practice. Tosso’s contemporaries remembered and honored him towards the end of his life because he encompassed the entire range of national music from regional ditties like the original “Arkansaw Traveler” to virtuoso concert performances of Mozart and Beethoven.¹¹⁴

So, too, patriotic music in concerts, civic celebrations, theatrical spectacles, and other settings drew upon structures of signification that included canonical European music, lively homegrown tunes about regional characters, sacral hymns to America’s majestic landscapes, and proudly martial marches. Local musicians linked these different kinds of music and their associations with aspects of national symbolism to the nation’s musical network. In performance, all had become national music. In the next chapter, we shall see how the music most associated with the patriotic sublime laid claim to be the major normative musical expression of national attachment.

¹¹³ Thomas Wilson, *The Arkansas Traveller* (Columbus, OH: Press of Fred J. Heer, 1900), 10.

¹¹⁴ Ophia D. Smith, “Joseph Tosso, The Arkansaw Traveler,” 29; see also Elizabeth Baer, “Music: An Integral Part of Life in Ohio[,] 1800-1860,” 200.

—Chapter Four—

The Brass Revolution: Volunteer Militia Bands and the Maryland Cadets in Boston, 1842

On August 2, 1842, 36 members of the Maryland Cadets, one of Baltimore's white volunteer militia companies, embarked on a tour to Boston with brief stops in Philadelphia, New York, and Providence, Rhode Island, accompanied by the band of music of the Independent Blues, another volunteer company. On a pleasant summer day (the temperature never left the mid-seventies) their departure was perhaps the most notable event in town. The tour had been publicly announced well in advance but, as the *Baltimore Post* reported, it was only on the morning of their departure that it had been "early rumoured" that the Cadets would drill in Monument Square before boarding a steamship for Philadelphia. The rumor "consequently drew a large crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and the Square during the evening presented quite a lively appearance." The crowd, in fact, was "so dense," continued the *Post's* report, that the company found its drill, accompanied as it was by the whirl of muskets and the rattle of drums, somewhat

constrained—“they wanted room.” Nevertheless, the drill was accomplished in a “highly creditable” manner even so, and afterwards the Cadets marched for the Philadelphia ship, attended by the “vast crowd.” The band “discoursed most eloquent music” as the Cadets marched down through the city. On their way the Cadets also “received, *a la militaire*, the prize flag.” They had won this flag two months earlier for successes at Camp Baltimore, an elaborate and long-planned militia muster that drew volunteer units from throughout the mid-Atlantic region.¹ Encampment, drill, parade, culminating in the Boston adventure – all in all, it had been a most successful summer for the Maryland Cadets, and with “three hearty cheers” from the crowd, they sailed for the northeastern cities.²

The impromptu ceremonial departure of the Maryland Cadets illustrates the importance of patriotic performance to everyday life in the middle of the nineteenth century. On a lazy August evening, city residents turned out for entertainment and for a civic ritual. As much as precise drill, the music was crucial to the militia’s public ritual: the “exquisite martial music” as another observer called it.³ Martial music performed by both amateur and professional military bands had by 1842 come to occupy a central role in the American national imagination.

¹ The “prize flag,” a specially-designed national standard costing \$100 (raised through contributions from Baltimore militiamen), was presented to the “best drilled and most soldier-like company which shall be present in the encampment.” It was a “splendid American Flag composed of the most elegant silken materials.” See *Salem (MA) Register*, August 8, 1842; *Niles’ Weekly Register*, October 20, 1841; *Baltimore Sun*, October 22, 1841; Thomas J.C. Williams, Folger McKinsey, *History of Frederick County, Maryland, vol. 1* (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1910, reprint 1967), 264-265.

² *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 1842. As print reportage of militia activity, especially in the *Sun*, will be an important source in this chapter, it should be noted that its publisher at least avowed at its founding in 1837, in the words of a contemporary historian, to be “the organ of neither party in politics...and to rely entirely upon its devotion to the common good.” See J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (originally published in Philadelphia, 1881; reprint Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971), 618.

³ *Baltimore Patriot*, August 2, 1842.

This chapter explores white volunteer militia culture and its music in the early 1840s, the heyday of the volunteer militia movement. The year of 1842 was a particularly important one for Baltimore's white militia companies, owing to the excitement generated by Camp Baltimore in May and the lengthy preparations leading up to it. The round of events that the Maryland Cadets engaged in during the summer of 1842 was typical of volunteer militias. Volunteer companies, like the Maryland Cadets or Baltimore Independent Greys, as well as militia bands like the band of the Baltimore Independent Blues, performed a regular round of social, civic, and military activities throughout the year, all accompanied by music. In this chapter, I connect militia culture to broader musical culture, and explore how a technological revolution in musical instrument technology made military bands throughout the country the central vessel for evoking emotions associated with the patriotic sublime.

The young men of the volunteer militias created a patriotic narrative that appealed to the visual, aural, and tactile senses, and was reinforced by print. This narrative was open for interpretation by its performers, the militia members and their bands, and their audiences. These audiences were comprised of a broad cross-section of urban society, although their precise composition is difficult to determine. White males took part in civic festivities most actively, and attempted to relegate African Americans to the status of observers. The presence of women as spectators was a vital part of the story of the militia. Their presence, although largely as observers, helped confirm the patriotic narrative that was the militiamens' objective: the "perception of a unified, virtuous

society.”⁴ Audiences flocked to the civic spaces where bands performed, taking part in affective patriotic rituals that claimed to embody consensual attachment to nation.

In the national and local civic rituals that so prominently featured the military band, performers and audiences collectively commemorated the heroes of the revolutionary era, their martial exploits, and the republican virtues that made their exploits possible. These commemorative rituals also imbued those who participated in them with something of the valor and virtue of their civic ancestors. They did so not least because the patriotic signifiers that evoked the heroes and founding events of the past, such as flags, uniforms, firearms, and, always, patriotic music, soon coalesced into a matrix of symbols and practices easily transferable to celebrations of contemporary events with national and local significance. By the early 1840s, practices in militarized public spaces had coalesced into a “mythic present.” Laden with familiar aural and visual signifiers and well-integrated into local civic life, they fused a glorious (if recent) history with a proudly martial present, one pregnant with opportunities for the nation’s future expansion. The volunteer militias and their bands had a central place in the enactment of this mythic present. With their gleaming uniforms, precision drilling, and disciplined bodily bearing, they were the tastemakers of the patriotic sublime in its military mode. They stood for manly martial courage, discipline, and skill, and could be observed by their fellow citizens in camp, drill, and parade.

Military bands participated in a broad range of public events taking place in civic spaces. Such events included annual national holidays, but also encompassed important local or regional celebrations like the Baltimore encampment in 1842 and, as we have

⁴ Harry S. Laver, “Re-thinking the Social Role of the Militia: Community-Building in Antebellum Kentucky,” *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 4 (Nov 2002): 791. See also Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 145-153; Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 65.

seen, the dedications of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Cincinnati Observatory, as well as more prosaic everyday events, such as the Maryland Cadets' departure for Boston. And all featured music. The 1842 Baltimore encampment and the Maryland Cadets' trip to Boston richly illustrate the centrality of volunteer militia companies and their music to urban cultural life. The bands were ubiquitous, performing in streets on parade, accompanying drills in public squares, supplying music at encampments, and featured during tours and excursions to other cities and neighboring towns. One historian, referring to New Orleans, cites an observer's estimation of ten militia processions every Sunday.⁵ Militia bands also performed commercial concerts in theaters and public gardens, and entertained elites at evening parties. Urban newspapers were replete with reports of a seemingly endless series of militia balls, excursions, concerts, parades, drills, and musters, the music of wind bands breathing throughout. These bands were, then, probably the most familiar public performers of patriotic music in America, and central to the dissemination of the emotionally-charged patriotic music that I am exploring throughout this dissertation.

As the sonic qualities of band music changed and became more brilliant with the development of instrument technology, it afforded auditors the ability to create meaning through the qualities of the music and its sound. For example, scholars have associated the physical phenomenon of marching with emotional arousal and with "social cohesion": "muscular bonding," as one scholar has termed it.⁶ Even in a social setting like a concert, marches and other kinds of martial music "can serve as a resource

⁵ Mary Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1997, 45.

⁶ William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2.

for...reconfiguring bodily conduct,” conduct involving both thought and action. As with a national song performed at the theater, for example, neither the venue or even the song was inherently patriotic. Instead, music and its performance in particular contexts “created an aesthetic climate conducive to the formation of knowledge about self-identity.”⁷ Band music, especially as bands increasingly switched to a higher proportion of new kinds of brass instruments, created a climate that listeners commonly reacted to with fervent emotion. The patriotic sublime, seen glimmering over the ramparts of Fort McHenry in 1814, was by 1842 embodied in the martial pomp of the proud volunteer militia performing in many settings.

Elite, Artisan, and Professional: Social Reach of the Volunteer Militia

The antebellum federal government spent decades trying, and mostly failing, to institute a successful statutory militia system, which would make available during wartime masses of trained militia drafted, theoretically, from all ranks of society. By 1842, the statutory militia, while still formally authorized, had been supplanted in the public mind by volunteer militia companies that more effectively symbolized the nation’s readiness for war. They were also a setting for white male citizens to form masculine bonds. With their concentration on associational life and precise drills, they presented a public image far removed from the unwilling statutory militia of earlier decades. Their music had changed as well. In Chapter One, we explored the importance of field music (the regular marching and camp music of fife, drum, and bugle) to the early national military. By 1842, the social roles of the militia and military bands had

⁷ Denora, *After Adorno*, 45-48, 59-82 (quote from p. 63). See also Linda Phyllis Austern, ed., *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-17, 335-342; Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, Richard Middleton, eds., *The Cultural Study of Music* (New York: Routledge, 2003), esp. chapter 3.

greatly expanded, encompassing a variety of public and sociable activities far beyond the militia muster. They presented a public face that seemed to answer the myriad, widely condemned problems of the statutory militia in the past, which included widespread absenteeism, poor discipline, and drunkenness.⁸

The volunteer militia units were more effective public examples of America's martial prowess for several reasons. As independent self-funded companies, they required the volunteer to purchase uniform and equipment and pay dues and various other social costs (ball tickets, excursion fees, and the like) that were beyond the means of the working man on the state's roster for militia duty. The volunteers were thus socially and culturally distinct from the statutory militia, and thanks to their expenditures they appeared different. With their precision drills and martial music the white volunteers looked and sounded like a genteel corps of competent, virile defenders of the nation. Finally, the masculine respectability they strived for did not extend to black Americans. Black citizens responded to this racial exclusion by forming their own militia companies and bands, a phenomenon I will return to in the next chapter.⁹

Historians of the militia have tended to classify the volunteer companies as "elite," but this is an oversimplification.¹⁰ In fact, members of the volunteer militia were drawn from diverse social and occupational backgrounds, including artisans and small shopkeepers, as well as elite professionals, larger manufacturers, and merchants. For

⁸ Lawrence D. Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812*, 179-212; Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers & Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865*; Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard*; Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 66-69.

⁹ See Margot Minardi, *Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 70.

¹⁰ Mahon, *History of the Militia*, 84-85; Ryan, *Civic Wars*, 46; Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: MacMillan, 1967), 156-157.

craftsmen and shopkeepers, the militia represented one important way to claim genteel status. It is possible to create a partial occupational profile of two of Baltimore's most prominent volunteer militias, the Maryland Cadets and Baltimore Independent Greys. Their captains, Archer Ropes and James O. Law, were both attorneys, and Baltimore's merchants and professionals were well-represented, especially lawyers and commission merchants.¹¹ In fact, increasing industrialization meant that old occupational categories describing the Early Republic's middling artisans now referred to an increasingly wide range of professional experiences. In 1840, 72% of Baltimore households were engaged in "manufacturing and trades," a broad category to which many militia members belonged. Another 21% were in the categories of "commerce" or "learned professions and engineers." Volunteer militia companies were useful vehicles of upward mobility for both young local elites and for men of the emerging middle class, anxious to demonstrate their genteel respectability.¹²

The occupations of other members were varied. They included a bookseller, a clerk, a confectioner, a painter, a "locksmith and bell hanger" (who acted as the Cadets' gunsmith), and a tailor, among others.¹³ Augustus P. Shutt, an unusually active member

¹¹ J. Thomas Scharf, *A History of Baltimore City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 249; *Matchett's Baltimore Directory*, 1842, Maryland State Archives.

¹² *Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1841), 31; Minute Book, Independent Greys, 1841-1848, MS 479, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, *passim* (hereafter cited as "Independent Greys Minute Book"); Record Books [Maryland Cadets], 1842-46, 1861, MS 2165, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, muster roll August 1842 (hereafter cited as "Maryland Cadets Record Books"). See also Rockman, *Scraping By*, 16-44; Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation*, chap 4.

¹³ Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 71-83. Blumin estimates the non-manual proportion of Philadelphia's adult male population at one-third in 1860. It would certainly have been less, perhaps significantly less, two decades earlier (Blumin's detailed analysis does seem to some extent to elide this passage of time). A "tailor" might be a skilled artisan working on individual commissions out of his own shop, perhaps in his home, or a white-collar businessman who sold imported clothes out of a large shop and employed other artisans.

of the Independent Greys and one of its three lieutenants (in 1844, he was also Vice President of the Independent Fire Company), was listed as a “fancy and windsor chair man.” He was a small manufacturer who had a “chair factory” on Gay Street, which sold, according to his advertisement in the city directory, “CHAIRS of every variety” both “finished to order” and “constantly on hand.”¹⁴ Joshua Dryden, a Private in the Maryland Cadets, was listed in the city directory as a “merchant tailor” operating on North Liberty Street.¹⁵ Shutt, who in later years commanded the Greys and was promoted to Colonel, and Dryden were examples of the blend of manufacturer and small-scale producer that one historian has argued was characteristic of Baltimore’s economy from the 1820s through the 1840s.¹⁶

The volunteer militiamen of the mid-nineteenth century were complex representatives of masculinity, as befits an era in which, as one historian has written, “for every example of hypermasculinity, many countervailing ones of gushing sentimentality can be found.”¹⁷ The models of manliness on display by the militias varied with the spaces and occasions on which they performed. As with that other well-known outlet for male sociability, the volunteer fire company, the genteel Victorian sense of masculinity blended with a rougher male fraternity.¹⁸ Genteel comportment at balls and concerts

¹⁴ *Matchett’s Baltimore Directory 1842*, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 145. No dwelling is listed, making it possible his shop was also his home.

¹⁶ Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation*, 86-87.

¹⁷ Donald Yacovone, “‘Surpassing the Love of Women’: Victorian Manhood and the Language of Fraternal Love,” in Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone, eds., *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 202.

¹⁸ On masculinity in fire companies, see Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); cf. Ric N. Caric, “From Ordered Buckets to Honored Felons: Fire Companies and Cultural Transformation in Philadelphia, 1785-1850,” *Pennsylvania History* 72 no. 2 (Spring 2005), 117-158.

blended with their displays of martial strength at public drills, and the roaring conviviality of dinners between host and guest companies on tours.

The members of wind bands attached to volunteer militias took part in their companies' masculine rituals and mirrored their social composition. For example, the members of the amateur band of the Independent Greys, formed in 1842, were drawn from a similar social mix as the company at large. Their first leader, Joseph Perine, was part of an unspecified "firm" operating on Pitt Street. Other members included two shoemakers, a painter, and the owner of V.L. & J. Confectioners: "wholesale and retail dealers in fruit, and western manufacturers of confectionary, lemon syrup, jellies, etc."¹⁹ Professional musicians occupied similarly varied social strata. Furthermore, the ranks of professional musicians in America were greatly swelled by immigration, particularly from Germany. Baltimore was one of the most important locations for this wave of immigration, which in the 1820s led to a proliferation of occupations, including musical ones. In 1842, professional musicians were the equivalent of artisans, relying on a varied menu of performing, teaching, and composing to earn a wage.²⁰ Then as now, professional musicians lived gig to gig.

Musical events, including public celebrations, associated with the volunteer militia had always been one important source of work for professional musicians. But by the 1840s the military band was a far cry from the fife and drum of the revolutionary and republican militias, and even from the familiar "band of music" comprised of woodwinds and straight brass. A technological revolution in band instrumentation, beginning in the

¹⁹ Independent Greys Minute Book, November 25, December 9, 1842; January 20, March 3, April 21, June 9, July 25, 1843; *Matchett's Baltimore Directory*, 1842; *Craig's Business Directory and Baltimore Almanac* (Baltimore: Daniel H. Craig, 1842).

²⁰ Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation*, 88; Rockman, *Scraping By*, 28-29; Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 149-151, 173, 184-185.

1830s and surging into the next decade, meant that band music required greater skill to perform, but was consequently more brilliant, stirring, and evocative. The brass band had begun to make its mark, in tandem with the growing visibility of the volunteer militia. Together they cemented the patriotic sublime as a central mode of American nationalism.

Wind Band to Brass Band

At a December 1841 concert at the Assembly Rooms, a popular Baltimore venue for instrumental and vocal concerts, prominent local musician James Deems led the band of the Independent Blues, one of Baltimore's many volunteer militias, in his own "Baltimore Fireman's March," and rather remarkably, performed two of his own compositions on the cornopean, an early version of the modern cornet, while accompanying himself on piano.²¹ Deems had become the leader of the band after returning from musical training in Europe. As captained by Deems, the Blues band had a local reputation for high quality performances, even though it was probably composed largely of amateurs.²² Hiring such amateur bands was one option for militia companies in need of musical accompaniment for a parade or other event. Companies could also rent another militia's band. For example, the Maryland Cadets hired the Independent Blues' band for their journey to Boston and for other events. They could also hire a professional band not attached to a specific militia company, or a company could attempt to form its own band by admitting new, musically-trained members.

Mid-century militia bands might seem *ad hoc* and informal compared to the professionalization of wind bands in the age of Sousa later in the century, but they were

²¹ *Baltimore Sun*, December 16, 20 1841

²² See for example *Baltimore Sun*, June 15, 1840; January 12, 1841.

better able to play than they had been earlier in the century more demanding and brilliant marches, quicksteps, and dance forms: genres far beyond field music. Moreover, uniformed and marching in step with their militia colleagues, they looked the part of soldiers. This was evident in the great encampment near Baltimore of 1841, and in the Maryland Cadets' journey to Boston. To get to that point required a kind of musical practice that both referenced past military music-making and represented striking innovation. These were proto-professional bands.²³

Thanks to the convergence of music, instrumentation, and the martial culture of the volunteer militia, militia bands were exemplars of the patriotic sublime: patriotic sentiment its audiences could hear, see, and even feel through their bodies. They were also good representatives of the scope and flexibility of America's musical culture, in their ability to adapt to multiple spaces and genres of music. The local story of the band of the Baltimore Independent Blues is an excellent case study that shows the increasing presence of the brass band in national life.

The transition from martial music using solely fife and drum, or mixed woodwind and early brass instruments, to the brass band was a technological transformation that changed the way people heard music. It was a sonic revolution. Military music had long been associated with specific sounds: the tramp of marching feet, the sounds of infantry drill, the boom of cannon. Music acts directly on the body as sound. Apart from the emotional effects inhering in music as a result of its formal construction, music as sound

²³ Hazen and Hazen, *The Music Men*, 22-23; Hansen, *The American Wind Band*, 19-36. For convenience, I use the terms "wind band," "brass band," "militia band," and "military band" more or less interchangeably for mixed bands of woodwinds, brass, and percussion, and bands made up solely of brass instruments and percussion, whose activity is at least in part associated with the volunteer militia. See Keith Polk, et al. "Band (i)." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 4, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40774>.

had “physical properties....It is fast or slow, regular or erratic...loud or soft.”²⁴ “Basic variables in human audition” such as loudness, timbre, and motion (i.e. tempo or speed) elicit “distinct results” in emotional activation.²⁵ Even the seemingly simple fact of *loudness* is important to the emotional impact of music. Studies have linked increased volume in music to emotional expressions such as excitement, triumph, joy, intensity, and strength or power. In partnership with associated visual and other sensory information (the flag snapping in the breeze; the whiff of gunpowder, and so forth), these elements evoke “feelings...which [were] then given emotional and/or metaphorical interpretations.”²⁶ In the mid-nineteenth century, new kinds of brass instruments were amping up such basic musical elements as loudness and timbre. Purely as sound, martial music was transformed by new advances in instrument technology.

Contemporaries also thought about music in these terms. They held that music acted directly on the emotions and the body. The listener evoked an emotional response because the sound was inherently “beautiful or sublime” and had “associations of grandeur or terror, tenderness or a remembrance of the past,” as one commentator wrote in 1825.²⁷ Writers for literary magazines made this a common theme: music was “the best recreation[,]...exercis[ing] at once both...body and...soul.”²⁸ Improvement included

²⁴ Tia Denora, *After Adorno*, 99. Simon Frith distinguishes a “biological” approach from musicological readings that more fully embrace cultural and social signifiers, writing that “if music is meaningful in emotional terms it is therefore largely as an effect of cultural rather than psychological conditions.” I agree, but the physiological effects of music are a factor. Frith virtually admits as much when he says that meaning is “largely” the effect of culture. See Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, 102-103.

²⁵ Juslin and Sloboda, *Handbook of Music and Emotions*, 384-393.

²⁶ Frith, *Performing Rites*, 104. As historian Mark Smith has said, sound was “socially constructed and mediated.” Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 264.

²⁷ “Music,” *The American Athenaeum: A Repository of Belles Lettres, Science, and the Arts*, Oct 20, 1825, 257.

²⁸ Bishop Beveridge, “Music a Devout Recreation,” *The Episcopal Watchman*, May 7, 1831, 408. Such language recalled the link between the emotions and refined sensibility so familiar to people like Francis

physical health, which music promoted both by direct action on “the lungs and other vital organs,” and from the “general flow of spirits which it is the especial prerogative of music to bestow.”²⁹ Martial music evoked the sublime as it made the feet move and the lungs resound. These writers thought it an ideal example of “the salutary influence of animating music,” especially as the sound of bands grew progressively louder and more brilliant with the advent of new brass instruments.³⁰

The first transformative instrument came from Britain in the form of the keyed or “Kent” bugle, invented in 1810. The natural or straight bugle was already long familiar in the military, but these valveless instruments were limited to the five notes of the harmonic scale in whatever key they were pitched to. The keyed bugle broke through this limitation with a series of five to twelve keys located at various points along the length of the instruments’ cylinder (Figure 4.1). This allowed higher-pitched brass instruments to play, for the first time, the complete chromatic scale (and thus act as a melodic voice). Still, the sound of these early keyed instruments has been described by modern scholars as “mellow and woolly,” and according to one, they were “rather delicate [and] not given to the rigors of field duty.”³¹ Finally, the keyed bugle, and brass instruments in general,

Scott Key earlier in the century. Middle-class uplift and the democratization of sensibility, it was thought, now made such emotions available to a broader public. See Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 222.

²⁹ “Vocal Music in Common Schools,” *New York Evangelist*, Feb 27, 1845; see also “Music Physiologically Considered,” *The American Magazine and Repository of Useful Literature, Devoted to Science, Literature, and Art*, December, 1841, 178.

³⁰ “Music, Dancing, and Exercise, As Affecting Health,” *The Water-Cure Journal*, July 1, 1846, 46.

³¹ The keyed bugle is considered to be an ancestor of the modern flugelhorn and is actually part of the tuba family. Ralph Thomas Dudgeon, *The Keyed Bugle* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 6-7; Dudgeon, “Keyed bugle,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 1, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14949>; Trevor Herbert and John Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Kenneth E. Olsen, *Music and Musket: Bands and Bandsmen of the American Civil War* (Westport, Conn., 1981), 25-27.



Figure 4.1. Keyed Bugle, ca. late 1830s (New Hampshire). The keyed bugle, with its conical bore characteristic of the bugle family, required a high level of expertise to master. In the rights hands, it was the first widely produced brass instrument able to perform complex melodies. Joe R. and Joella F. Utley Collection, National Music Museum.

were not yet standardized, and required a high degree of expertise to play. What was wanted were sturdier, standardized, brass instruments with more brilliant voices.

Valved brass instruments, first developed in Germany, were the central innovation in the rise of the brass band and gradually replaced the keyed bugle and other keyed brass instruments. James Deems' cornopean, an early term for what became the modern cornet, was one such instrument (see Figure 4.2). Valved instruments like the cornet were both easier to master and better adapted for marching band use than the older equivalents.³² Keyed instruments lingered until the Civil War but quickly faded away in postbellum America.³³ The shift to valved instruments in higher registers, such as trumpets and cornets, was accompanied by an equivalent transformation in brass instruments of all kinds. Low register woodwind instruments such as the bassoon gradually gave way first to keyed brass equivalents (primarily the ophicleide) then to valved instruments, especially the family of saxhorns, which existed in all registers and became the quintessential Civil War-era brass instrument.³⁴

The proportion of brass instruments in volunteer militia bands rose steadily throughout the first half of the nineteenth century (see Table 4.1 below). Regular Army bands used more brass after an 1832 edict cut the number of musicians allowed in

³² Dudgeon, *The Keyed Bugle*, 1-7; Anthony C. Baines and Arnold Myers, "Cornet," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press.

³³ Robert E. Eliason, *Keyed Bugles in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 24; Arthur Bradley, *On and Off the Bandstand* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 3.

³⁴ The saxhorn was developed during the 1830s and patented by Adolphe Sax in 1845. It was just being adopted in the United States in the mid-1840s, but its tonal flexibility and ease of use meant that it quickly came to dominate brass bands. For example, by 1851 the celebrated Boston Brass Band had transitioned entirely to a variety of saxhorns for the lower registers.



Figure 4.2. Cornopean, 1843, on right. On the left is an early two-valved trumpet. The valves on both are of the rotary variety. The cornopean, an early version of the modern cornet, had a slightly warmer tone than bright notes of the trumpet, but both, unlike earlier straight brass, could play complicated melodic lines. Joe R. and Joella F. Utley Collection, National Music Museum.

regimental bands to eleven (half as many as previously, in some cases). Army bands responded by jettisoning woodwinds in favor of the new brass, seeking their big sound.³⁵

Table 4.1: Proportion of Brass Instruments in Wind Bands, 1801-1851

U.S. Marine Band – 1800		Salem Brigade Band – c. 1806		Boston Brigade Band – 1824		Boston Brass Band – 1835		American Brass Band, Providence – 1851	
Oboe	2	Clarinet	5	Clarinet	6	Key Bugle	1	Conductor	1
Clarinet	2	Bassoon	2	Flute	1	Cornet	4	Key Bugle	2
Horn	2	Trumpet	1	Bassoon	1	Trumpet	2	Cornet	1
Bassoon	1	French Horn	1	Key Bugle	1	Alt. Saxhorn ¹		Posthorn	1
Drum	1	Serpent ¹	1	Trumpet	2	Bas. Saxhorn	2	Trumpet	1
		Trombone	2	Horn	2	Trombone	1	Alt. Saxhorn ¹	2
		Triangle	1	Serpent	1	Ophicleide	3	Ten. Saxhorn	2
		Bass Drum	1	Bass Horn	1		1	Bar. Saxhorn	1
				Drum	1			Bass Saxhorn	3
				Cymbals	1			Side Drum	1
								Bass Drum	1
								Cymbals	1
Total:	8		14		17		14		16
Brass:	1		5		7		14		16

The increasing numbers of brass instruments, as well as their concentration at the expense of woodwinds, did more than made bands louder: it made their sound more uniform and brilliant as well. These new sounds undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of military bands and the high profile of their music, and contemporary critics claimed that brass band performances enraptured a public quite willing to be carried along on the emotional tide.

Among some critical observers, brass band performances ran afoul of emerging norms separating “refined” music from the merely popular, and we can glean something from the naysayers about their sonic power. When British phrenologist George Combe gave a series of lectures at the Museum of Natural History in Philadelphia, he felt compelled to write a letter of complaint to the museum’s director about the noise from

³⁵ Hansen, *American Wind Band*, 24.

the brass band concert upstairs and the raucous behavior of the audience: “the music is so loud that it often drowns my voice, and when the audience above applaud with their feet, I have no alternative but to stop till they have done.”³⁶

“Verily it is the age of brass,” wrote a correspondent to *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, lamenting the “present surcease of all quiet, temperate, unfeverish music.” He admitted that brass bands were suitable for some “noble function[s]” and grudgingly acknowledged that “there are good musicians in our principal brass bands.” But he associated their sounds with the cacophony of urban street life: it was the “natural accompaniment” for all the “vulgar noises, heats and smells of crowded, dirty city streets.” Yet, he did not deny its capacity to mobilize powerful sentiment:

By all the power of Brass, in league with Gunpowder, we publish and proclaim our patriotism. With the unthinking multitude the first attribute of patriotism is the war-like spirit; and war-like music is predominantly brass. The military brass band sets the key to all the music of our national rejoicings. Witness the ‘stunning’ programme of the Grand Military Concert, which is to lift the patriotic souls of thousands upon wings of glory...³⁷

Evocatively confirming the emotional impact of band music, the observer also highlights the linkage between patriotism, musical sound, and martial noises like cannon fire.

By the time the observer in *Dwight’s Journal* weighed in, the volume of sound and jarring but thrilling timbre of brass and its association with war was solidly ensconced in literature. Transcendentalist Christopher Pearce Cranch linked these characteristics to warfare in his sonnet “Trumpets and Trombones:”

³⁶ Combe estimated the crowd at the concert to be between two and three thousand people. George Combe, *Notes on the United States of North America During a Phrenological Visit*, vol. I (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1841), 316.

³⁷ Anonymous, “The ‘Heated Term,’” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, July 3, 1858, 109-110. It is entirely possible that this editorial was written by John Sullivan Dwight himself. The program for the “Grand Military Concert” (for the Fourth of July) included “The Star Spangled Banner,” “Yankee Doodle,” “The Marseilles Hymn,” and other patriotic favorites, some set to cannon fire. On the comparison to urban street noise, see Upton, *Another City*, chapter 4.

A band of martial riders next I hear,
Whose sharp brass voices cut and rend the air...
Those arrowy trumpet notes so short and bright,
The long-drawn wailing of that loud Trombone,
Tell of the bloody and tumultuous fight...³⁸

Another writer wrote simply that “assuredly there is no instrument of such...martial character as the trumpet,” but he was, like the correspondent in *Dwight’s Journal*, critical of its emotional wallop:

There are doubtless individuals of a waltz-like frame of mind, who prefer the soothing too-tooting of a flute to the inharmonious trump of the brazen instrument....[but] it is a fact that one blast from the trumpet of Fame will make one and all of them turn up the white of their eyes in the most ecstatic delight...³⁹

These observers reinforced the martial associations of trumpets and other brass instruments, and did not have far to look to see and hear them confirmed, since one of the brass bands’ most visible functions was to accompany soldiers on the march.

A satirical anecdote about a Battle of the Bands, one with old-style instrumentation and the other a brass band, led respectively by the musicians “Higgs” and “Bigger,” confirms the cultural associations of brass and its big, booming sound with the rowdy outdoors. Bigger’s band “entirely drowned the squeaking tones of Higg’s band with the clang of sounding brass” at the militia parade, but Higgs had the advantage indoors:

‘It seems to me that them sweet tones of Higg’s are the best,’ said judge No 1.
‘Yes, but see how strong Bigger does it – music ain’t good if it ain’t loud,’ said judge No 2... ‘But we will see! this is the last piece.’ [said judge No. 3.]
The tune selected was ‘Yankee Doodle.’ Higgs excelled himself; it was certainly ‘music,’ said the ladies; never had this great ‘national march’ been played so sweetly....But Bigger had a chance yet. Great was the noise, and rapid was the

³⁸ Christopher Pearce Cranch, *Poems* (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1844), 115. The sonnet is from a series called “Sonnets on Musical Instruments.”

³⁹ Anonymous, “The Art and Mystery of Blowing Your Own Trumpet,” *American Whig Review*, December 1852, 536-537.

execution of the air, by the leader of the ‘Independent;’ the Higgonians said it was like a locomotive, with the steam whistle in full blast...⁴⁰

The punchline was that the loud sound of his brass band scrambled Bigger’s brains:

Bigger becomes an “idiotic individual” who could be found years later wandering the streets of the town. (The anecdote also reveals the complex valences that patriotic songs like “Yankee Doodle” could have in different settings: “sweetly” musical in indoor heterosocial spaces or a “brazen” proclamation when played by a brass band in the streets.)

An observer reviewing Ned Kendall’s Boston Brass Band, probably the most famous band in the country (Figure 4.3), in 1839 also drew a sharp distinction between indoor and outdoor spaces, reserving the brass band’s legitimate use for the latter only:

The Brass Band have given three well attended Concerts.... We like to hear their music in its proper place; that is, in the open air, at the head of one of our handsome volunteer companies, for instance: for we know that they have some very good performers among them. Neither do we blame them for making money when they can. But that performances on such instruments, in the concert room, where they cannot but be heard to the greatest disadvantage, should meet with greater success than any others offered to the public, presents indeed a humiliating picture of the public musical taste.⁴¹

Critical as he was of the brass band’s indoor use and of the unrefined “taste” of a public who would pay to see one play in a concert hall, the critic confirmed brass band’s significance in outdoor civic rituals accompanying a “handsome militia.”⁴²

Other observers, happy to see the brass band in both settings, disagreed. An ensemble like the Boston Brass Band *could* exhibit indoors the same sweetness as the apocryphal Higgs’ band. Its music, “though in a small hall, sounds perfectly soft and

⁴⁰ Joe Miller, Jr., “Blowed His Brains Out,” *Spirit of the Times: A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage*, July 18, 1846, 244 (reprinted from the St. Louis Reveille).

⁴¹ “The Concerts,” *The Musical Magazine, or, Repository of Musical Science, Literature and Intelligence*, Boston, May 11, 1839, 158.

⁴² Ibid.



Figure 4.3. Boston Brass Band, 1851 (*Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, August 9, 1851). Note the variety of over-the-shoulder Saxhorns and the band's trim, professional, and martial appearance.

smooth... We notice in the B.B. Band a perfect uniformity in the different parts—no instrument is allowed to predominate, but the melody and accompaniments blend smoothly together...”⁴³ Disagreements about whether the setting was proper to the militia band disclosed its importance to different kinds of audiences in both commercial and civic spaces.

Professionals and amateurs alike played in the touring bands that spread the sound of the new brass instruments into their own cities’ hinterlands and throughout the country. Some brass bands were professional outfits, like the Boston Brass Band, who hired themselves out for public events of all kinds. However, most militia bands, like the band of the Baltimore Independent Greys, were filled largely by amateurs. In any case, the line between musical amateurs and professionals was not clearly demarcated. Most amateurs lacked formal training, and what training there was in the United States still followed an apprenticeship model. The professionals who did play in militia bands usually worked at other musical occupations as well, such as teaching and music publishing. (They also sometimes traveled to Europe for musical finishing. The transatlantic flow in the other direction was also significant. Musicians emigrating from Europe, especially England and Germany, were a sizeable proportion of music professional in the antebellum era.)⁴⁴

As with many musical developments, the rise of brass started in New England and New York but quickly made its way throughout the country. The Boston Brass Band and Boston Brigade Band, along with Thomas Dodworth’s eponymous band in New York, all

⁴³ “Playing in the Band,” *Boston Musical Visitor*, October 24, 1843, 186.

⁴⁴ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 56-57; Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 300-301; John Koegel, *Music in German Immigrant Theater: New York City, 1840-1940* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 1-18; Lubov Keefer, *Baltimore’s Music*, 108-112.

started as quasi-professional outfits independent of militia companies. They became nationally famous and toured throughout the country by the 1840s. Their bandleaders and soloists, particularly the renowned Edward “Ned” Kendall, became public superstars: “as experienced bandsmen listened to Kendall play music which was impossible to play, an aura of magic mysticism grew up around him.”⁴⁵ Associations like the Salem (Massachusetts) Brass Band were more typical of the burgeoning band culture. Started as early as 1800, it grew in size and gradually switched to brass instruments over the decades. The Salem band toured (for example, with a “circus and menagerie”) to improve its musicianship, and by 1855 had become a fully professional band under the baton of the celebrated impresario Patrick Gilmore.⁴⁶ This process of professionalization and the knitting together of cities and regions through martial music occurred in urban centers throughout the nation, including Baltimore.

James Deems and Baltimore’s Militia Bands

The band of Baltimore’s Independent Blues militia company was led in the late 1830s and early 1840s by James M. Deems. Deems and his band exemplified the traits of the antebellum militia band. It contained professionals trained in the *ad hoc* music industry of the pre-Civil War era; moved easily between differing performance spaces and distinct audiences; and spread patriotic music as it performed at the 1842 Baltimore encampment and traveled with the Maryland Cadets to Boston. Along with the still-

⁴⁵ Dudgeon, *The Keyed Bugle*, 82. See also Hansen, *The American Wind Band*, 19-36; Robert E. Foster, *Wind Bands of the World: Chronicle of a Cherished Tradition* (Delray Beach, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 2013), 55-62; Edward Franko Goldman, *The Wind Band: Its Literature and Technique* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1961), 34-44.

⁴⁶ *Salem Register*, February 18 and 22, 1841; *Salem Gazette*, June 1, 1841; *Salem Register*, December 23, 1841; Hazen and Hazen, *The Music Men*, 29-37.

gestating band of another company, the Independent Greys, and a number of other militia bands, the band of the Blues filled the street, concert halls, and other public spaces of Baltimore with martial music.

James M. Deems embodied the musical training of the era. Born in 1818, He displayed musical talent as young as five. His early musical training was informal: he studied the clarinet and French Horn with William Rountree, captain of his father's militia company, learned the bugle (including the keyed version), piano, and organ, and was playing in an orchestra at the age of thirteen. As a young man, he followed the path of many young musicians to Germany, where he finished his musical education and studied composition and the cello. Back in Baltimore, he became an integral part of the musical and social community.⁴⁷

Deems was not only familiar with militia culture but a member of Baltimore's elite. His father Jacob Deems was a well-known local citizen and one of the Old Defenders (having captained an infantry company in the Battle of North Point in 1814). Jacob Deems made his living as a tanner and leather merchant and eventually became a civic leader. He was a Justice of the Peace, captain of the Union Yagers militia, officer in the United Hose and Suction fire company and several other civic organizations, and was even proposed as interim mayor when Jacob Small resigned the office in 1831.⁴⁸ The elder Deems was the dedicatee of a piece of sheet music, "Captain Deems' March," printed and possibly composed in 1824 by the leading Baltimore music publisher John

⁴⁷Granville L. Howe, W.S.B. Mathews, *A Hundred Years of Music in America: An Account of Musical Effort in America* (Philadelphia, 1900), 298-299; *Baltimore Sun*, April 18-19, 1901; Joseph A. Bomberger. "Deems, James Monroe." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2087325>.

⁴⁸*Baltimore Patriot*, March 1, 1815, March 2, July 2, 1819; January 17, 24, 1820; *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, February 15, 1831; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 92, 253.

Cole, who was a famous compiler of sacred tunebooks and also a militia band leader and clarinet player during the War of 1812.⁴⁹ Familiar as he was with marching music, Cole included pointers in his sheet music so the home performer could visualize the piece as performed on the march by a militia band. In effect, the piano player at home could “hear” the public voice of the music (Figure 4.4).

The march’s figurations, like the trumpet fanfare that opens the piece, betray its band origins. Although scored for piano as most sheet music was, its individual sections show the performer the intended wind band parts. The left hand mirrors the marching rhythms in the syncopated, triumphal melody, which is strongly on the beat and composed mostly of simple fifths, sevenths, and octaves. It is certainly not pianistic, and the effect is to mimic the march as originally played by a wind band (whose parts would have been written out on small pieces of paper or memorized). The publisher also helpfully notated the original instrumentation at several points, so the pianist at home could easily imagine the trumpets playing the ringing fanfare, and the bugle with its solo in the second section. “Captain Deems’ March” demonstrates how martial music could move from public to private space, since both the printed sheet music and the parlor piano sound contained visual and aural reminders of its public performance.

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, the younger Deems⁵⁰ and his band demonstrated the flexibility of the band repertoire in a broad range of performance

⁴⁹ Richard Crawford. “Cole, John.” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06072>; John H. Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall, or Glimpses of the Past. A Retrospect of the Past Fifty Years* (Baltimore: Turnbull, 1877), 71.

⁵⁰ Deems had an elder brother, Jacob Deems, Jr., who was also a musician and a member of the Independent Blues, and was perhaps James Deems’ original introduction to the company. Jacob Deems, Jr. did not make the impact of his brother musically and left little trace in the historical record. See Baltimore *Sun*, September 1, 1838.

79

dup sk

CAPTAIN DEEM'S MARCH.

BALTIMORE, Published by JOHN COLE, No 123. Market Street.

TRUMPETS.

TRUMPETS.

BUCKLE SOLO.

FIN.

BUCKLE.

DA CAPO.

Entr. according to Law July 8th 1824 P. Moore, Clk Dist Maryland.

79

Figure 4.4. "Captain Deem's March," sheet music (Baltimore: John Cole, 1824). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

venues. In each, the Blues band represented the resplendent patriotism of their venerable volunteer company, which had been founded as early as 1792 and had been long known for their “natty dress and excellent drill.”⁵¹ Deems’ evident talent and high social standing allowed him to assume command of the band of the Independent Blues as early as 1836, when he was just eighteen. At twenty he was playing in the orchestra at the Holliday Street Theatre. Deems and his band were conspicuous at concerts and balls. A ball sponsored by the Independent Blues in 1836 was opened with a “grand Military March” (composed by Deems) from the band, which “stood deservedly high in the estimation of the citizens.”⁵² The same year, they performed at an outdoor fireworks display, where “artificial Bomb Shells” accompanied the “splendid Band” and its leader, who performed “several Voluntaries and Variations” on the keyed bugle. Events like these combined the martial symbolism of military dress with polite sociability, including dancing. They strengthened through music the links between elites and middle-class Baltimoreans inside and outside the military.⁵³

A concert in December 1841 organized by and featuring James Deems shows how musical styles and cultural signifiers blended together in a single performance space. Some of the city’s brightest musical lights (“many of the most distinguished professors and amateurs in the city”) assisted, including Henry Dielman, violinist, flutist, conductor, and music director of the Baltimore Theatre; Frederick Lucchesi, flutist, band member, master of the piccolo and music teacher (especially voice and bass), and Michael Pfaff, a

⁵¹ Scharf, *A History of Baltimore City and County*, 668.

⁵² *Baltimore Gazette*, April 4, 1836.

⁵³ The fireworks display was intended as a family event: admission was only 25 cents per person, but the organizer promised that “an efficient Police has been engaged, who will preserve order, and prevent the admission of improper characters.” While not as exclusive as a ball, the organizers of the fireworks display made a conscious attempt to control access, unlike more public events such as parades. *Baltimore Gazette*, April 4, August 4, 1836.

clarinet (and harmonica) expert and piano merchant.⁵⁴ The musical expertise and variety of musical professions on display demonstrates the catholicity of interconnections among musicians and suggests the artisanal nature of music education. The program featured a mix of popular airs, incidental music from the theater (for example, an overture from Ferdinand Herold's comic opera *Zampa*), glees, virtuoso showpieces for Deems and others, and music with military themes or martial style. The latter, besides the "Baltimore Fireman's March," consisted of the "Winslow Blues' Quickstep," a piece written for a Boston-area volunteer militia company probably in 1836 and popularized by Ned Kendall (see Figure 4.5). The inclusion of martial music and the militia band on a concert program was not unusual and indicates the popularity of the genre in multiple performance spaces.

From its beginning, march music has been intended to do just what the name describes: evoke and accompany the rhythmic, repetitive physical movement of march steps. The quickstep was a much-loved variant, in duple instead of quadruple time, and like the march proper described a military maneuver, marching at the quickstep—that is, in double time. The middle of the nineteenth century was the beginning of the heyday of the march as popular music. Marches like the "Winslow Blues' Quickstep" abounded. They were musically straightforward, relying on strong repeated rhythms and heavy periodic accents: "essentially an ornamentation of a fixed, regular and repeated drum rhythm," as one scholar has said.⁵⁵ The quickstep, like the Winslow Blues piece, was a march variant, perhaps sprightlier than a regular march in common time. Phrases are

⁵⁴ Quote from *Baltimore Sun*, December 16, 1841; Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 673; Keefer, *Baltimore's Music*, 70, 79, 110; Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall*, 67-69.

⁵⁵ Erich Schwandt and Andrew Lamb, "March," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40080>.

short and choppy, consisting largely of two bars. Note also this quickstep's characteristic straight eighth-note pair that ends each phrase in the introduction, followed by a short rest: the effect is a sense of forward propulsion. The tempo mark is "spiritoso," that is, with spirit.⁵⁶ When played by a brass band of, conservatively, more than a dozen members in an indoor space, the sound of the spirited, up-tempo march must have been overwhelming. Finally, the iconography exhibited on the cover of the "Winslow Blues' Quickstep" is significant. It depicted the encamped company, drawn up in its serried ranks, straight as a ruler, in their neat, stylish uniform coats and white pants, the star and stripes waving over all. Although concert attendees would not necessarily have seen this particular piece of sheet music, they could see the band of the Independent Blues right in front of them. The sound of the music combined with the visual iconography of the military band made the mythic present easy to imagine.⁵⁷

The band of the Independent Blues was an example for Baltimore's other militia companies. One company that took up the challenge of forming its own band was the Independent Greys. The Greys, a young company founded in 1836, were one of Baltimore's most active, engaging in a regular round of public drills and parades, excursions down the Chesapeake, balls, and more.⁵⁸ In the fall of 1841, the company seems to have become involved in a dispute with the band they had been hiring for these

⁵⁶ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 275-277.

⁵⁷ McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*, 132-138.

⁵⁸ The Greys were captained by James O. Law, a prominent local attorney very familiar with male volunteer organizations. As a young man he had marched with the Washington Society on July 4, 1828 during the landmark cornerstone celebration of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Concurrent with his militia service, he was elected mayor of Baltimore in 1843, serving for only a year, and subsequently became President of Baltimore's Independent Fire Company. Independent Greys Minute Book, M, *passim*; Wilbur F. Coyle, *The Mayors of Baltimore: Illustrated from Portraits in the City Hall* (Baltimore, 1919), MdHS; Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 247-249; *Detailed and Correct Account of the Grand Civic Procession in the City of Baltimore on the Fourth of July, 1828*, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD, Special Collections.

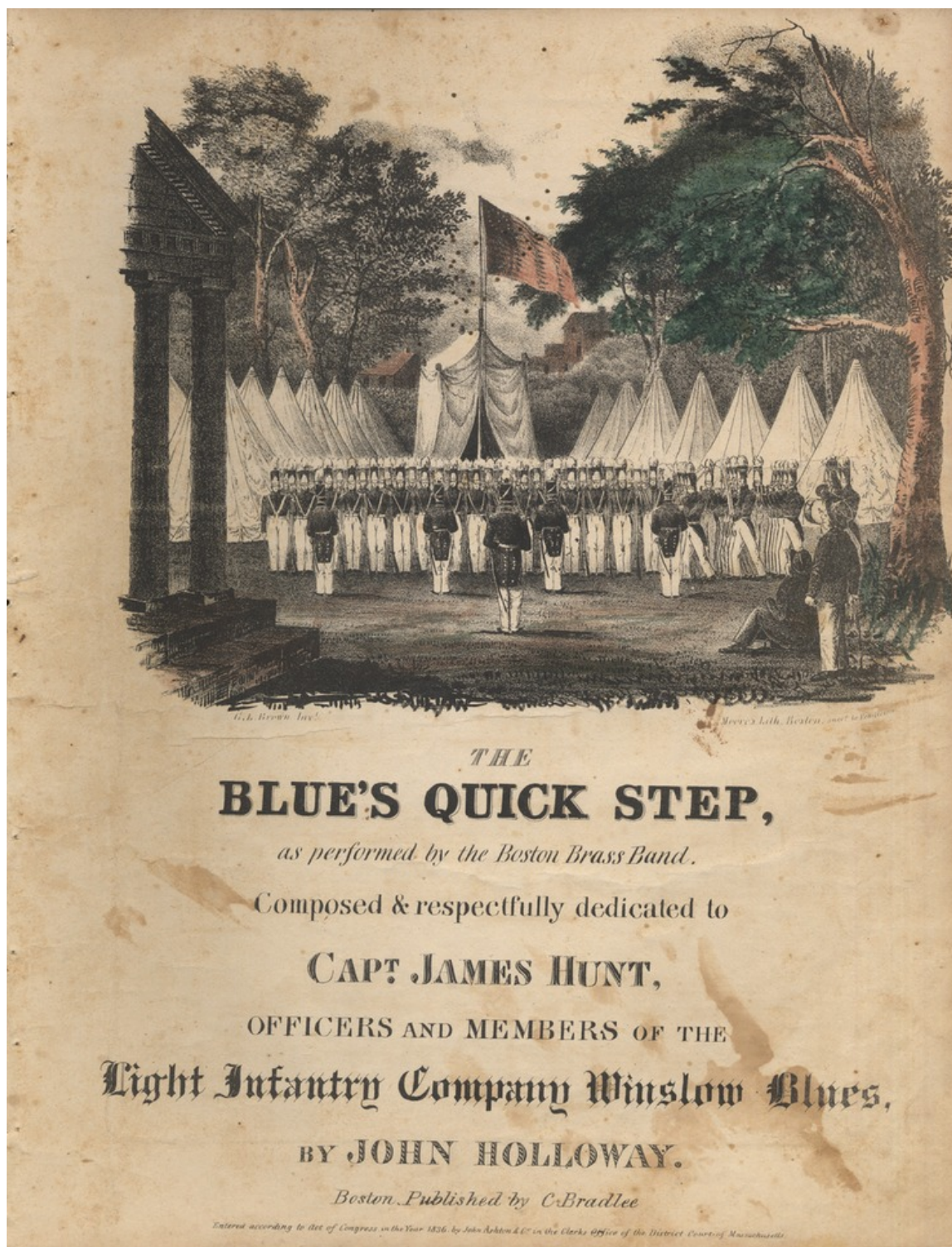


Figure 4.5. "Winslow Blues' Quickstep," sheet music cover (Boston, 1836). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

occasions, Murray's Brass Band,⁵⁹ so they appointed a committee to "to take into consideration the propriety of dismissing Murrays Brass Band," which recommended that they be "discharged without delay." The company passed an official Resolution to do so, including instructions that the "Band Committee be directed...to make the necessary arrangements relative to their uniforms and equipment as yet unpaid for."⁶⁰ Given the studiously formal proceeding leading to the separation and the mention for the record of outstanding debts, it is likely that the members of the band had stretched its credit with the company too far. For most of the next year, the Greys hired music for specific occasions, such as the July 4th parade, a late-summer excursion down the Patapsco to Bear's Creek, and Defender's Day on September 12.⁶¹

By forming their own band, the Greys indicated the increasing importance of reliable musical performance to volunteer militias. That they were even willing to provide uniforms for a hired band (for the militiamen themselves, this was an individual expense, and a potentially heavy one) also indicates the importance placed by militia companies on integrating the band into the visual pageantry of the company on parade.⁶² Hired bands were common in large part because of the scarcity of trained brass musicians, especially as instrument technology changed, so it is no surprise that given the opportunity a company like the Greys would have leaped at the chance to produce

⁵⁹ This was apparently a professional or quasi-professional band that was hired by militia companies and for a variety of similar entertainments and celebrations. In the summer of 1842 they were very active providing martial music for excursions on the Chesapeake and Patapsco as "Murray's Military and Cotillion Music." See for example *Baltimore Sun* August 15, 1842.

⁶⁰ Independent Greys Minutes, Meetings on September 17 and October 8, 1841.

⁶¹ The Company netted \$67.38 from the Bear's Creek excursion. Independent Greys Minutes, December 3, 1841; May 27, June 10, August 12, 26, September 5, 16.

⁶² A Massachusetts private paid \$21 for his uniform in 1821. Mahon, *History of the Militia*, 83-84.

reliable music from within their ranks.⁶³ That opportunity came in October of 1842, apparently due to a family connection, when a member of the Greys, a Mr. Farburton, proposed hiring a band that was “very anxious to join the company.”⁶⁴ The Greys immediately formed another committee to see about the possibility of “procur[ing] uniforms for the Band.”⁶⁵ Private Farburton, already the company’s “trumpeter” (i.e. bugler), appears to have formed the Band with the help of his father, another militiaman. The plan was approved just a week later: “the proposition of the band is that the men become members of the company & be subject to the Captain’s orders, except the bearing of arms.”⁶⁶

The public comment quickly embraced the new band. After the original eight band members (including Private Farburton with his bugle) paraded with the company on November 21, an observer gushed: “their ranks were very full, and their appearance quite martial and effective....The company was preceded by their new band, which is now completed, organized, and uniformed, and from the ‘taste of their quality’ which we enjoyed yesterday, we promise ourselves a welcome accession to the musical corps of our city.”⁶⁷ In highlighting their “martial” appearance (pointing out their new uniforms and organization, for example), the observer confirmed the visual and musical effect the Greys aimed for. The “taste” of “quality,” might have meant approval of the band’s musical abilities, but could also be read as broader approval of their refined and martial

⁶³ Kenneth E. Olson, *Music and Musket*, 20-22.

⁶⁴ Independent Greys Minute Book, October 21, 1842.

⁶⁵ The Farburtons, father and son, have been otherwise lost to history, except an entry in the city directory listing “Wm. Farburton” as a tinner. See Independent Greys Minute Book, October 28, 1842; *Matchett’s Directory*, 1842.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Independent Greys Minute Book, November 2, 4, 11, 1842; *Baltimore Sun*, November 22, 1842.

masculine comportment. After this successful debut, the Greys' band continued to grow, boasting a robust twenty members by the following summer.

The Greys' band also labored to keep up with the transition to more modern keyed and valved brass instruments. We have only hints of their instrumentation, but these are instructive. Soon after the parade on November 21st, the company was hunting for new instruments to rent, and approached the lodge of the Improved Order of Red Men to "ascertain what price they asked for the instruments which they hold."⁶⁸ Thanks to Baltimore's web of male volunteer and fraternal organizations, their inquiry yielded fruit. The lodge was willing to let the Greys buy their instruments on "instalment [*sic*]," the first one to be paid upfront, allowing "cr[edit] on the balance."⁶⁹ Expenses were ever a concern, however. The music committee refused to elect a Mr. Glenn to the band without assurances that he would pay for his own instrument and uniform, and similarly refused to elect an "offclyde" [ophicleide] player "until the company is able to pay for the necessary expense."⁷⁰ But by obtaining instruments from the Order of Red Men and carefully considering new admissions with an eye toward growth, the company got its band and introduced new instruments.

The Independent Greys and its new band could look to James M. Deems and the band of the Independent Blues as a model of a successful militia band. Deems was a respected professional and the band was engaged in a constant round of activity, both with its own company, the Independent Blues, and as a hired group. 1842 was especially busy for Deems and his band. That year encompassed not only the usual public parades

⁶⁸ Independent Greys Minute Book, November 25, December 9, 1842.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ It is probable that one or more of the Greys was also a member of one of the two Baltimore lodges of the Red Men, founded in 1834 and 1838. See Ibid; see also Charles H. Litchman, ed., *Official History of the Improved Order of Red Men* (Boston: The Fraternity Publishing Company, 1893), 247-255.

and drills, summer boat excursions, and concerts that were the military band's typical fare, but also a grand encampment and a highly publicized trip to Boston with the Maryland Cadets.

Camp Baltimore: Military Encampment as Performance

The volunteer spirit was a check on the perceived ineffectualness of the standing militia. For every criticism of the country's militia system in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, there was an encomium to the volunteer companies to counter it, and as American musical culture grew, so too did the importance of volunteer militia bands in shaping the perception of military prowess. Even foreign chroniclers noted this fact. A British colonel, observed a New York corps with a "splendid band at their head," and told his British readers that "the cavalry volunteer corps are...equal in every respect to your Yeomanry at home, while the bands...are far superior."⁷¹ As I have shown, the militia band participated in many different kinds of musical activity, performing at elite social events and commercial venues, as well as in civic events of many kinds.

Encampments were a prominent part of militia culture. As events of intense and prolonged interaction, they strongly reinforced fraternal ties. They also had a public function: they were popular destinations for local leisure seekers, places for civilians to observe a "real" military camp, socialize, and carouse. The encampment was also meant to inculcate discipline in the volunteers, who demonstrated their skills and their patriotism through drills, parades, successful sentry duty, and even the regularity of their tents. The ideal encampment was thought to be a bracing facsimile of actual military

⁷¹ Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 216-217.

service, where onlookers saw military techniques and heard martial sounds, all performed amidst familiar patriotic signifiers.⁷²

By 1842, the public had become accustomed to encampments as social events. Local encampments of individual companies lasting for a day or two, often on the Fourth of July, prepared the ground for much more extensive events like Camp Baltimore. In both 1840 and 1841, the Maryland Cadets had encamped for two days on the grounds of the country estate of Chauncy Brooks (near what is now Druid Hill Park) to celebrate the Fourth of July. The festivities in 1840 included a reading of the Declaration of Independence, a shooting contest for a piece of silver plate, and infantry exercises, including “skirmishing by bugle sounds.”⁷³ The following year, the Cadets informed the public that they would “be gratified to receive visits of ladies and gentlemen at any time during the encampment—we presume, however, that it would be more agreeable to visitors to witness the ‘dress parades’ of the company” before 11am and after 4pm each day.⁷⁴ Like parades, the encampment emphasized the ritualized performance of battle maneuvers. Dress parades, with the company in full regalia accompanied by fife and drum or, better, a brass band, were especially thrilling examples of martial drill.

Music and other martial sounds permeated encampments. They including everything from the pageantry of a familiar patriotic tune played by a military band to the roar of cannon fire, and the bugler or drummer sounding the call to breakfast.⁷⁵ Daily

⁷² See Harry S. Laver, *The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 30-32.

⁷³ *Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 1840.

⁷⁴ *Baltimore Sun*, July 3, 1841.

⁷⁵ See Charles Stewart Ashworth, *A New, Useful, and Complete System of Drum Beating* (Washington, D.C., 1812), in Joseph Donnelly, “Music in the Army,” Cincinnati History Library and Archives, Mss fD685; George M. Whipple, “History of the Salem Light Infantry,” *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute* 26 (July to December, 1889), 292; Clark, *Connecticut’s Fife and Drum Tradition*, 50-51.

drum calls, “the clock of the camp,”⁷⁶ drills and mock battles. Drills approximated the experience of men on the frontlines: military manuals covered them, including the drum, fife, and bugle tunes that initiated and controlled their timing, in minute detail, because they duplicated the maneuvers of soldiers under fire. Field music was central in the public imagination to professional soldiering. For example, the ideal unit would engage twice a day in the “dress parade,” during which

A signal will be beat or sounded half an hour before *troop* or *retreat* [i.e. the beginning and end of the working day, of course signaled by the music], for the music to assemble....*Ten* minutes after that signal, the *Adjutant's call* will be given, when the companies will be marched (the band playing) to the regimental parade, where they will be formed in their relative positions in the order of battle, arms ordered and at rest....The music will be formed in two ranks on the right of the Adjutant, and from the *Adjutant's call* to *troop* or *retreat*, the band will play....⁷⁷

With every movement and segment of the day punctuated by drum, fife, or bugle, traditional military instruments in their serried ranks made a vivid impression. “The music” formed in “two ranks” could describe just the drummer and fifer of each company, but the new innovation of the all-brass band could also easily fit those instructions. This twice-daily parade was just one moment when military music accompanied martial discipline during camp duty.

Planning for the great 1842 encampment stretched over a year and encompassed myriad details. Reports were suffused with eager paeans to the spirit of the volunteers, Baltimore civic leaders’ promotion of their city, and the planning of martial symbols. The impetus came after a “public-spirited citizen,” hearing of another proposal for an

⁷⁶ Gustav Kobbe, “The Trumpet in Camp and Battle,” *The Century Magazine* 56 (1898), 537-543, quote on 537.

⁷⁷ Samuel Cooper, Alexander McComb, *A Concise System of Instructions and Regulations for the Militia and Volunteers of the United States, comprehending the exercises and movements of the infantry, light infantry, and riflemen; cavalry and artillery...* (Philadelphia: Robert P. Desilver, 1836), 3, 257.

encampment near Frederick, Maryland, was moved to propose Baltimore instead. He wrote, “Let our military be up and doing...we could have 10,000 fine uniformed volunteers among us from the various States of the Union.” He continued in the spirit of civic boosterism: “It would create a spirit which would fill *our* regiments; bring men together; associate fine feelings; improve the business of our city; demonstrate the rapid progress of internal improvement; in a word, it would do much for the good of our general country.”⁷⁸ As the date for the event neared, local merchants were reminded that “next week an immense number of strangers will be in Baltimore, and bargains should be offered to induce them to leave as much money in the city as they have to spare.”⁷⁹ Such an encampment could boost Baltimore’s commerce and enhance the visibility of Baltimore’s railroad and canal infrastructure.

Members of Baltimore’s volunteer militias picked up the planning from there, burying themselves in the nuts and bolts of the encampment including the expense of rations, the command structure, fare deductions from local railroads to and from the encampment, collections for expenses from local companies, the order of drill, and the loan of “tents and camp equipage” from the federal government.⁸⁰ Anticipation started to mount: the *Sun* hoped that “the camp of course will be a scene of beauty and fashion, and thousands of visitors will submit to it.”⁸¹ A Philadelphia paper reported “the military companies of Baltimore are all agog about the great encampment that is to be held next

⁷⁸ *Baltimore Sun*, July 23, 1841.

⁷⁹ *Baltimore Sun*, May 14, 1842.

⁸⁰ *Memorial of the Military Convention held at Frederick City to the Legislature of Maryland* (Maryland House of Delegates, February 15, 1842); *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates of the State of Maryland, December Session 1841* (Annapolis: William Johnston, 1841), 297; *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates of the State of Maryland, December Session 1842* (Annapolis: William Johnston, 1841), 97, 150-151.

⁸¹ *Baltimore Sun*, November 12, 1841.

week near that city. From the country round, a good number of companies are coming in.”⁸²

The scene of the encampment was one of visual and aural grandeur. Visitors were treated to the thrilling sight of dozens of volunteer companies accompanied by the sounds of drill and music. Thirty two companies, sixteen from Baltimore city, the rest from other parts of Maryland, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, took part, many of them having paraded to the grounds west of the city between the turnpike to Frederick and the Baltimore & Ohio railroad on Monday, May 16.⁸³ The volunteers presented a picture of attractive masculinity: “bright eyes beamed responsive to the arms that gleamed in the sunshine, and military plumes nodded assent to the invitation of the wavy locks that adorned the brow of beauty.” This rapturous observer also couched the initial parade from Baltimore City out to the encampment site in intensely emotional terms, complete with an appropriate musical reference:

The *young* ‘defenders of Baltimore,’ men ready at any moment to emulate the heroic deeds of ‘the old defenders,’ were to be [at the encampment], and all were going there to see and admire them; and having seen and admired them, their hearts swelled proudly at the sight, and they felt that so long as *such* soldiers are to be found in the country,

The star spangled banner in triumph shall wave,
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.⁸⁴

In noting the readiness of the “young” volunteers and linking them to the locally revered War of 1812 veterans, the observer evoked the mythic present. His portrait of the scene

⁸² *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 13, 1842.

⁸³ *Easton (MD) Gazette*, May 7, 14, 1842; *Philadelphia North American and Daily Advertiser*, May 16, 1842; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 16, 1842; *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 1842. If we assume 40 to 50 men per company (the Maryland volunteers 1841 report to the Assembly recommended no more than 72 in any single company; the Maryland Cadets 1842 roster listed 57 members, a handful of whom were likely absent from the camp), a rough estimate of the troops in the encampment would be 1,300 to 1,600. For other descriptions of encampments, c.f. *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 17, 1842; *Baltimore American*, May 17, 18 1842; *New York Weekly Herald*, May 21, 1842. Estimates of numbers of spectators throughout the encampment ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 each day (depending on the day).

⁸⁴ *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 1842. Italics in original.

combined the sight of the virile contemporary volunteers with the “Star Spangled Banner’s” evocation of the tattered flag flying in victory over Fort McHenry in 1814.

The band of the Independent Blues reinforced the connection to favorite patriotic songs: their music “enliven[ed] the camp on all proper occasions, with the music which is familiar to the ears of the city.”⁸⁵ The military precision proclaimed by observers was strengthened by the ubiquitous music: drills were “enlivened with the sound of the drum, the shrill fife, and various other martial instruments of music.”⁸⁶ An observer from a Washington D.C. paper enthused about the sounds of marching and music during preparations for the march from the capital to the encampment:

The colonels, captains and soldiers in this neighborhood are all preparing to march to the Baltimore encampment! The drum and fife is heard in all directions, and squadrons of horse, with bugles and clattering feet, are pouring down from the mountains of Maryland to join in the pageant on the grand review day. *Vive le militaire...!*⁸⁷

One description of the encampment setting used an analogy to theatre: it was an “amphitheatre formed by the gentle acclivities running from the stream that bounds the camp ground on the west,” which “presented a beautiful scene of life in mingled repose and activity.” Commentators did not neglect the sounds that augmented the martial nature of the grounds. The artillery (including that of the regular army artillery, on hand from Fort McHenry) that saluted the Governor of Pennsylvania during his official review was particularly noticeable. The *Sun* reported “the noise of their ‘big guns’ created a sensation

⁸⁵ *Baltimore Sun*, May 20, 1842.

⁸⁶ *Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 1842.

⁸⁷ “Washington,” *New York Weekly Herald*, May 21, 1842.

of almost fear among the more timid in their immediate neighborhood, while it was a matter of delight to the more distant spectators.”⁸⁸

The “magnificent spectacle”⁸⁹ of the encampment was complicated by its other face: a space for men and women to congregate for entertainment, including picnicking and drinking. The “Camp City” adjoining the actual grounds sold \$3 licenses for liquor booths,⁹⁰ and even music reminded the public of this bacchanalian quality – and hinted at much-denigrated militia muster of old.

Two versions of sheet music for the “Maryland Cadets’ Glee” (published in 1838 and 1839), the piece performed at James Deems’ farewell concert in 1838, evocatively illustrate the janus-faced public functions of encampments. In the first, an encampment, with neatly aligned tents and the American flag flying, appears in the background. But the cadets in the foreground are roaring drunk (Figure 4.6). One has half-collapsed and four of them, cups empty, stare hopefully at a fifth soldier who is peering at the dregs in one bottle. Meanwhile, another cadet is intently engaged in opening a new one.⁹¹ The second piece published a year later shows a similar camp, with the soldiers in the background, drawn up in serried ranks (Figure 4.7). The bucolic scene emphasizes the encampment as a polite tourist destination. One group has arrived in a carriage and its members peer around, looking into the tents and observing the soldiers, amidst a scene of almost pastoral beauty.

Musically, “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” was a fairly simple version of the genre, with little harmonic or rhythmic complexity and much easy-to-follow stepwise

⁸⁸ *Baltimore Sun*, May 19, 1842. On the 21st, the *Sun* advertised a “lithographic print” of the encampment for sale.

⁸⁹ As one Philadelphia paper reported it: see *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 20, 1842.

⁹⁰ *Baltimore Sun*, May 6, 16, 1842; *Philadelphia North American*, May 16, 1842.

⁹¹ Note also the Cadets’ uniforms, which are probably true to life.

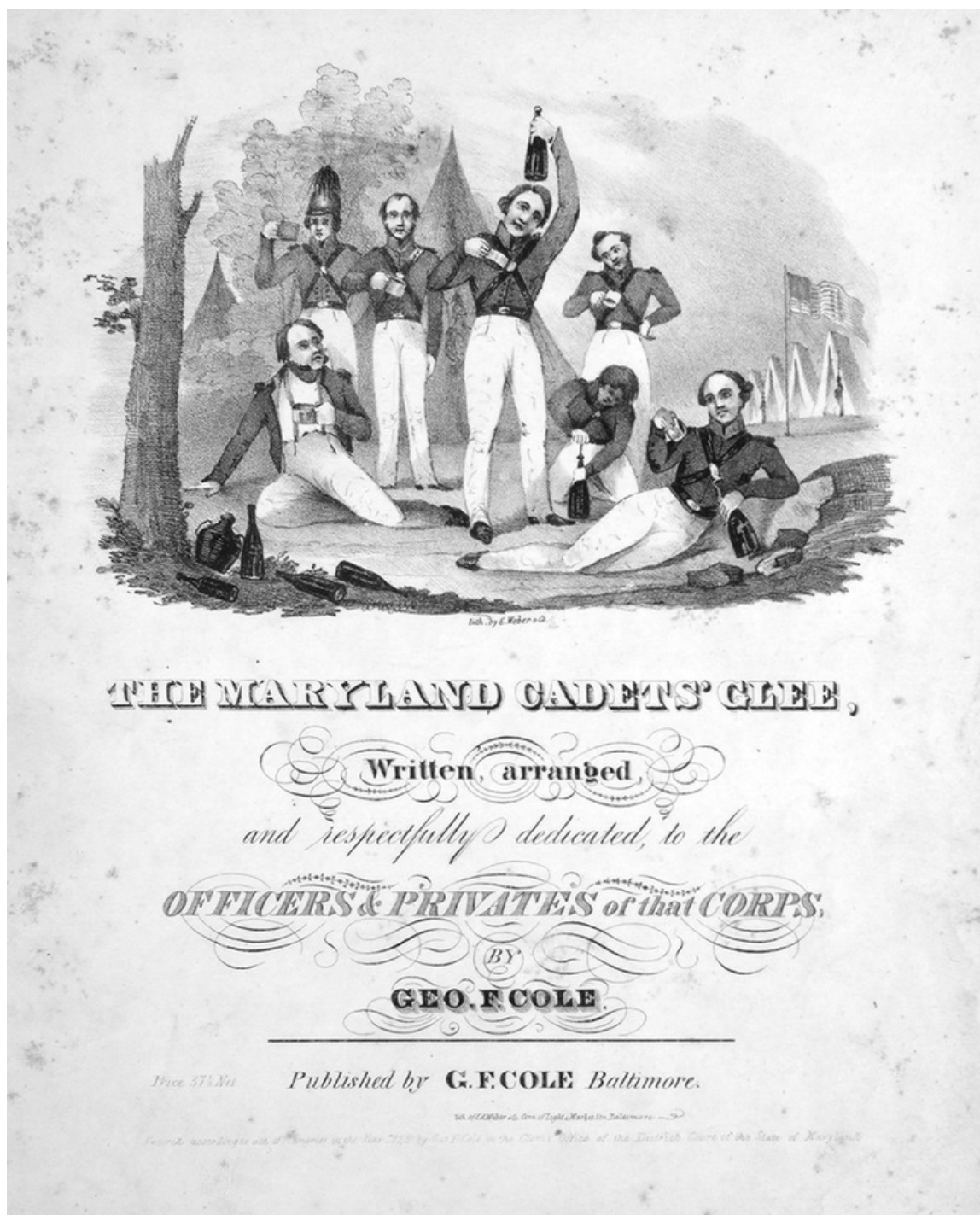


Figure 4.6. “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee,” sheet music cover (George F. Cole: Baltimore, 1838). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 4.7. "The Maryland Cadets' Glee," sheet music cover (Baltimore: George F. Cole, 1839). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

movement: a song likely intended for amateur soldiers to sing themselves.⁹² The lyric to “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” combined two features of the encampment. The first verse emphasizes its convivial masculine sociability:

A soldier’s life is always gay, always gay,
His home is on the tented field...
Drink, drink my boys, drink, drink my boys,
Dream not of the morrow,
Woman and wine’s the toast divine
We’ll drown all thoughts of sorrow...

But in the second and third verses the sentiment swings to include the soldier’s patriotism and heroism, even to death in battle:

‘Tis you ‘tis I may chance to fall, chance to fall
When the drum beats to arms we know no retreat,
Rather our Flag, be our winding sheet
A Soldier’s proudest heritage, his proudest heritage...

The song continues in this vein, including an oath to “the Girls we love,” recalling the important subset of patriotic music emphasizing the soldier longing for wife or mother, or the mother mourning her brave son lost in battle. Combining the pathos of the home front with warlike sentiment, and throwing in copious drink for good measure, “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” encapsulated the combination of entertainment and patriotic sentiments that made up the encampment experience.⁹³

⁹² A glee was a partsong in four-part harmony, for much of its history intended for four male voices – in this case, two tenors and two basses. Interestingly, this scoring eliminates the alto part, which would have been sung in falsetto. One wonders if the scoring was a nod to the self-constructed masculinity of militia members. In the nineteenth century, glees were increasingly scored for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, thus including women in their performance. See David Johnson, “Glee,” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 7, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11269>.

⁹³ David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 1-33; Roger Spalding, “Introduction: Entertaining Identities,” in Spalding, Alyson Brown, eds., *Entertainment, Leisure, and Identities* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 1-9; Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 118, 144.

Militiamen at Camp Baltimore also used martial music subversively in an impromptu burlesque performance at night. An observer from Philadelphia described the event in a lengthy laudatory missive about the encampment. The burlesque took place on a night of pouring rain that transformed the grounds into a “duck-pond on a large scale, a picturesque exhibition of pool and quagmire.”⁹⁴ The rain seems to have produced a slacking off of discipline. At any rate, it prompted the burlesque, complete with cross-dressing and music:

Several companies were parading with all sorts of costume and equipments – some with blankets over their shoulders, some with bedquilts and calico coverlids, one had on an old woman’s gown, and several of the officers had military cloaks made of coonskins with the tails of the animals hanging in rich profusion around their persons. Their arms were as strikingly diversified as their dresses; – one shouldered a fence-rail, another a corn broom; domestic implements of all kinds were substituted for muskets; swords were represented by soup ladles, cartouche boxes by coffee mills, epaulettes by dishcloths, &c. Thus arrayed they went through a number of military evolutions, marched and counter-marched to the sound of martial music, and appeared to enjoy themselves exceedingly.⁹⁵

The burlesque lampooned the much-publicized peccadilloes of the statutory militia. Even as late as 1842, many Americans continued to criticize militia musters as scenes of crude debauchery (temperance reformers were especially vociferous in their attacks). Their jeremiads singled out the lack of refinement and proper civic virtues at musters, more so than military unpreparedness. Volunteer companies answered both criticisms: their elite and upward-striving middle class members self-consciously labored to present themselves as genteel and capable soldiers. Still, in moments like Camp Baltimore’s

⁹⁴ “Camp Baltimore. Scenes and Circumstances – Military Excitement – Gunpowder and Rain-water,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 21, 1842.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

nighttime burlesque they reminded onlookers and themselves of the bacchanalian face of the militia.⁹⁶

The scene the next morning was very different, even “brilliant”—a return to martial virtue. The troops were now “very imposing and splendid” in their “tasteful uniforms,” and performed their maneuvers “with great regularity.”⁹⁷ By satirizing the revered patriotic symbols of music, uniform, and military maneuvers on Friday night then demonstrating their proper forms for the (much larger) crowd the next day, the volunteers emphasized their distance from the ineffectual militia of the past. But the caricature also speaks eloquently to the tension between the mythic present of martial vigor and skill on one hand, and the awareness of the militia’s perceived failures over the previous decades on the other. The burlesque could have been interpreted as ridiculing militarist patriotism and its signifiers: the sublime turned ridiculous.

The Maryland Cadets in Boston

Camp Baltimore was representative of the periodic large-scale encampments that fired patriotic sentiment across regions. A Philadelphia paper reported that it had “been productive of much good feeling between men from the different States, who are prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder, should their services ever be required in defending our common country.”⁹⁸ Visits between locales by individual volunteer companies, in which a host company and its city feted the travelers for a day or several days, had the same effect, and were more common. Newspapers covered the visits closely

⁹⁶ Mary Ellen Rowe, *Bulwark of the Republic: The American Militia in the Antebellum West* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 83-84, 88-89; Laver, *Citizens More than Soldiers*, 1-2; Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 188-192.

⁹⁷ “Camp Baltimore,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 21, 1842.

⁹⁸ *Philadelphia North American*, May 25, 1842.

and associated them with the patriotic sublime. In August 1842, the Maryland Cadets undertook just such a visit: a journey up the East Coast to Boston, with brief stops in Philadelphia, New York, and Providence. The patriotic sentiment that accompanied them was the emotion of the mythic present, afforded in part by the musical events of the Cadets and their band. The progress of the prize-winning Maryland Cadets up the east coast is an ideal case study of patriotic music and the use of civic ritual to promote sectional ties.

Their Boston destination was a homecoming of sorts, and illustrates the workings of inter-regional fraternal bonds. Augustus H. Newman, a merchant and New Englander by birth (while still resident in Boston, he had been the captain of Boston's Independent City Greys), moved to Baltimore and founded the Maryland Cadets in 1835. In 1842, Newman was promoted and his former first lieutenant, Arches Ropes, was promoted to captain. Ropes was likely the driving force behind the trip to Boston, not only because he knew Newman so well, but because he too was a New Englander from Salem, Massachusetts.⁹⁹

Relations between the Maryland Cadets and the Independent Blues were very cordial, and so it is not surprising that the band of the Independent Blues accompanied the Cadets to Boston. They had both participated in Camp Baltimore earlier in the year, and the band had escorted the Cadets on their parade back to the city after they won the prize flag at the encampment. Later that summer, the Cadets recorded an official

⁹⁹ Baltimore's volunteer companies were officially organized into regiments: Newman was promoted to colonel of the 53rd Regiment, to which the Cadets were attached. Newman died (apparently on a merchant voyage at sea) while the Cadets were in Boston. They hurried home for the funeral observances as a result, cancelling brief engagements in Providence and Philadelphia. Ropes, who had been Acting Captain during the Boston trip, was officially promoted to captain of the company soon after. See *Salem (MA) Register*, August 8, 1842; *Boston Daily Atlas*, August 11, 1842; Maryland Cadets Record Books.

resolution of enthusiastic thanks and brotherhood with the Independent Blues (passed at one of their meetings), and invited their band to go on the tour to Boston.¹⁰⁰ Cordial links between militia companies, even between different kinds of fraternal organizations (as with the Greys' rental of musical instruments from the Order of Red Men) played an important role in the spread of patriotic musical culture.

The Cadets and their borrowed band took ship on the evening of August 1, and, with a brief stop in Philadelphia, arrived in New York City the next day. They were hosted by the New York Light Guard and spent the day parading, being reviewed by the Mayor, and feasting with the Light Guard. Their short stay of ten hours or so in New York thus encompassed the city's civic spaces and fraternal mingling with the New York company. Their departure, "amid the strains of sweet music, the roar of artillery, an immense concourse of citizens, and the Light Guards," was a colorful event indicative of the highly publicized nature of even so short a visit, as well as the real feeling it engendered. A naval vessel did the Cadets an unusual honor as they passed, as the Cadet's journal of the visit noted: "the yards and rigging were manned and a passing salute of three hearty cheers was given by all hands on board of the ship. The Cadets in line at a present [arms] and the [Blues'] band playing 'Hail, Columbia;' on passing up East River the view of the City and shipping then in port was sublime."¹⁰¹ The Blues' band likely performed in both this public setting and the semi-private space of their mid-day collation with the Light Guard. The manning of the naval vessel and the band's performance of the rousing patriotic favorite climaxed the short visit.

¹⁰⁰ Captain Ropes had sent a letter of thanks to the Blues after the encampment, singling out "Capt. Deems and the Independent Blues Band for their voluntary, kind and flattering escort" following the Cadets' victory. Maryland Cadets Record Books, 7-17.

¹⁰¹ Maryland Cadets Record Books, 34-35.

Brief stops in Philadelphia and Providence¹⁰² sandwiched the stirring New York sojourn, and their journey culminated in their arrival in Boston. The Boston Independent Cadets met the “banner corps of the late Maryland Encampment” with an artillery salute and escorted them to their encampment on Boston Common. The Maryland corps was “a fine looking set of young men, in a most superior state of discipline.” Upon arrival, they gave an example of drill, “going through the manual at the tap of the drum in a most beautiful style.... Their dress consists of a dark blue coat, trimmed with gold lace, white pantaloons, black leather cap, initials M.C. on it in front, brass visor, and black fountain plumes.”¹⁰³ Commentary about precise details of militia uniforms was common in notices of drills or performances that featured martial music: militia uniforms were a central visual element in their public image.

In fact, there was so much interest in such details that Philadelphia publisher William Huddy published *The Military Magazine* in Philadelphia for three years, which focused on the uniform, composition, and history of individual militia companies. The entry for the Philadelphia National Greys from 1839, for example, details visits to small cities in Pennsylvania as well as to Boston and New York, accompanied by a “very superior Brass Band, composed of excellent musicians, and got up at the expense of the Greys.” The description of this militia band as a “Brass Band” is significant. At this early date in the revolution in brass instrument technology, the band of the Philadelphia National Greys apparently already featured a high proportion of brass instruments, and

¹⁰² The Philadelphia and Providence stops were cut short by unforeseen civic trauma. Philadelphia was still recovering from a race riot, and in Providence the “present unsettled state of affairs” caused by the Dorr rebellion resulted in a quick return to their steamer.

¹⁰³ *Boston Daily Atlas*, August 4, 1842. See Philadelphia *North American*, August 3, 1842; David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1861: Toward Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), part 1; “Boston Trip,” Maryland Cadets Record Books; letter, James R. Darrance to Archer Ropes, July 27, 1842; Maryland Cadets Record Books; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 599-603.

the writer for the *Military Magazine* readily noted it, signaling the terminological shift from “band of music” to “brass band.” An 1841 entry for the York Pennsylvania Rifle (they maintained the singular, for unknown reasons) noted its close relationship with Baltimore’s Independent Blues and detailed the Rifle’s uniforms including its “gilt buttons, stamped with bugles...patent leather liberty cap...[and] tomahawk and scalping knife.”¹⁰⁴ Stylish uniforms identified companies, and the trimly uniformed militiaman and band member linked performance spaces and was himself a patriotic signifier.

The account of the trip written down by the company’s secretary overflows with light-hearted descriptions of convivial occasions enlivened by music. Patriotic feeling suffused reportage of the Cadets’ public appearances in Boston and surrounding areas, but just as important to the Cadets themselves was the sociability provided by the trip and their hosts. Just as with the May encampment and their other local activities, the volunteers created a masculine space set apart from everyday concerns. Constant dinners, balls, and mid-day collations marked nodes on the network connecting militia volunteers with compatriots both regional and national. The ardent patriotic sentiments, often accompanied by music, expressed at such events served as public examples of sectional union. For example, at a dinner at Porter’s Hotel in Cambridge on August 4 (“Such a Dinner. The world could not beat it”) for the Cadets and the Boston City Greys, the companies arranged themselves along a long table with the captains at one end and the music (probably a combination of the Independent Blues band and Boston musicians) at the other. The dinner was a performance, observed by “the smiling beauty of the Fair in the Galleries [*sic*] above.” The Cadets’ chronicler noted the “fine” music – “Songs hard

¹⁰⁴ “The National Greys of Philadelphia,” *The Military Magazine and Record of the Volunteers of the City and County of Philadelphia*, May, 1839; “The York Pennsylvania Rifle,” *The Military Magazine and Record of the Volunteers of the City and County of Philadelphia*, July, 1841.

to get over” – and the “appropriate” toasts, which were “cross firings over the Champaigne.”

A dinner in Charlestown later that afternoon was a similar public performance, despite the inconvenience of its being a temperance affair. Four and a half hours of feasting, speeches, and music included a new minstrel song, “Lucy Long,” which “edified the company much.”¹⁰⁵ This song, whose provenance is uncertain, later became one of the best-known minstrel tunes: it was part of the Virginia Minstrels’ “Ethiopian Concert” at Boston’s Masonic Temple in March 1843, which historians regard as the first complete performance of the classic form of the minstrel show.¹⁰⁶ “Lucy Long” is typical of early minstrel tunes in its simple, repetitive structure. The misogynist and racist lyric, of which there are many widely varying versions, usually portrayed Lucy as either a powerless sexual possession or a sexually promiscuous predator. We do not know what version the Maryland Cadets might have heard in 1842 (or what they found “edifying”), but its inclusion in the dinner is fascinating evidence of the reach and rapid spread of popular music into many different forms and spaces of entertainment, including in this case a convivial, fraternal meal surrounded by patriotic signifiers.¹⁰⁷

Parades were, as we have seen, the public event that most closely connected musical performance and patriotic feeling. Each day of the Cadets’ visit to the Boston area was punctuated by parades, the central rituals of the volunteer militia’s patriotic narrative. The rousing atmosphere of the parade was, by 1842, heightened by the technological revolution remaking wind bands into brass bands. Such was the case after

¹⁰⁵ Maryland Cadets Record Books, 41.

¹⁰⁶ Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 114-120.

¹⁰⁷ Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 125-127; William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, 307-312. There are many sheet music examples; see for example “The much admired and popular song of Miss Lucy Long,” (Philadelphia: George Willig, 1842). Levy Collection, Box 20, Item 45.

the Cadets' well-lubricated feast at Porter's Hotel during a day trip on August 5th to Cambridge, after which they and the Boston Greys climbed aboard the train back to Charlestown. "Loud Huzzas...from the Crowd" greeted them "along the roads," and when they arrived in Charlestown, the two companies joined up with a third, the New England Guards, "thus forming one of the handsomest Battalions in the country," for the march back to the Boston. No less than three "splendid Bands" accompanied this parade, including the two most celebrated in the country, the Boston Brigade Band and the Boston Brass Band. The Cadets' chronicler reported precise numbers of musicians: twenty one in the Brigade Band, twenty five in the Brass Band, and sixteen in Deems' Blues band, led by the cornopean of James Deems and Ned Kendall's celebrated keyed bugle. The ensuing parade, with its "stirring music of the bands," was duly reported in the *Daily Atlas* and other papers the next day. It "came off in beautiful military style"¹⁰⁸ and was an "elegant and imposing show."¹⁰⁹

Newspapers usually described parades, drills, and public reviews as mobbed by crowds of citizens. The *Daily Atlas* described the Cadets' drill on the Common at the end of the August 5th parade: "a vast concourse of people."¹¹⁰ A parade route from Boston to Charlestown and Bunker Hill, where the Baltimore company's prize flag had been placed atop the almost-completed Monument, included a short trip by railroad "passing several manufacturing towns the inhabitants of which appeared delighted to see us, while passing they made the welkin [i.e. sky; firmament] ring with loud Huzzas." One of these towns had placed a banner alongside the tracks that read, "A Yankee Welcome to Southern

¹⁰⁸ *Boston Daily Atlas*, August 5, 1842.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* All other quotes in this paragraph are from the Cadets' own description of these events in their record books: Maryland Cadets Record Books, 1842-46, 1861, 35-45.

¹¹⁰ *Boston Daily Atlas*, Aug 5, 1842; see also the *Boston Evening Transcript* of the same day.

Friends.” Bostonians seemed anxious to elide regional difference: during the Cadets’ day trip to Salem the newspaper similarly described them as “our Southern friends,” as well as the “Maryland boys” and the “Marylanders.”¹¹¹ Such report reinforced regional ties between volunteer companies and other participants in their public events. The Cadets’ chronicler wrote that “the waving of the Handkerchiefs by the Ladies together with their beautifull [*sic*] smiles made the Cadets feel quite at home.”¹¹² The brief railroad jaunt seemed to confirm to the Baltimoreans the atmosphere of unity between regions that saturated the entire trip.

The climax of the Cadets’ Boston journey brought together brass band music with the martial sounds and music of drill. Their visit to Salem, Captain Ropes’ boyhood home, provided a fitting end both to the journey itself and to the narrative of patriotic feeling the Cadets’ trip to Boston provided. The Salem Independent Cadets hosted the Baltimore company, and the Salem Brass Band, still in the process of professionalization, joined the Independent Blues Band to provide music. The Cadets encamped on Salem’s common and then paraded for the review of the governor of Massachusetts. Their example at drill greatly impressed the local reporter, who had earlier evinced the fear that the Cadets’ reputation was overblown: it “astonished some who were not aware of what military *science* can do for a corps. The accuracy, and precision, and *oneness*...with which they went through the manual of arms – the facings, halfings, and even complicated maneuvres at the *tap of the drum* merely, without any *word* of command, was wonderful...”¹¹³ This wordless tattoo, so ingrained in the militiamen, was at one end

¹¹¹ *Salem (MA) Register*, August 8, 1842.

¹¹² All quotes in this paragraph are from Maryland Cadets Record Books, 39-40, except where otherwise noted.

¹¹³ *Salem (MA) Register*, August 8, 1842.

of the spectrum of military music. The other end was in evidence at the dinner that followed at the Town Hall, where music was provided by the joint forces of two brass bands. Finally, there was more drilling on the Common, “at the tap of the drum [and] by bugle signal” in front of another crowd.¹¹⁴ The public events continued until the Cadets’ return to Boston the next day. The whirlwind day and a half was the highlight of the trip, and reports of the Cadets’ exploits appeared not only in the Boston area, but also in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York over the following two weeks. The ring of brass instruments in America’s public spaces was replicated in print discourse.

Two years later, in the “excessive heat” of a Baltimore July, the Boston City Independent Greys paid a return visit to their “brother company,” the Maryland Cadets. Replicating the Cadets’ itinerary in reverse, the Greys traveled through Providence, New York, and Philadelphia en route to the Monument City, arriving on July 19, 1844. As with the Cadets’ Boston visit, the convivial aspects of the trip were overlaid with the rhetoric of military discipline and preparedness. The captain of the Boston company went as far as to request “only soldier’s fare” for their encampment: “preferring salt beef, bread, and coffee from the camp kettle, on a camp stool, than any more delicate fare.”¹¹⁵

The Cadets’ chronicler, a new secretary who surpassed his 1842 predecessor in flowery rhetoric, equally emphasized the martial connection. He described the Cadets’ “Forty Nine Muskets and Seven Officers,” accompanied this time by the Baltimore Independent Greys’ band, marching to the train station “with steps firm as Warriors marching forth to bloody fields of War.” The Boston company arrived and formed up, marching past the Cadets, who were drawn up in line. Here the chronicler was carried

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Maryland Cadets Record Books, 1842-46, letter copied from Captain Thompson, Boston City Independent Greys Jun 26, 1846.

away by the moment's sublimity: "as they passed the Boston Brass Band broke forth in Strains which seemed to rend the Heavens, every man's heart beat full, and the unconscious tear almost dimmed the Soldier's eye, for there is that about Sweet Music, and happy recollections to make even the stoutest heart sympathetic." Escorted by the Cadets and several other Baltimore companies, the Boston Greys paraded to their encampment, erected in Mount Vernon Place. "Camp Washington" was hard by the Washington Monument, "so that the shadows of that majestic pile which had been erected to the 'Father of his Country,' might be looked upon by the Soldiers of this day in remembrance of his wish[,] in Peace prepare for War."¹¹⁶

The enthusiastic chronicler's last phrase referred to a line in George Washington's fifth annual address to Congress in 1793: "If we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war."¹¹⁷ Was the chronicler referring to the troubles coalescing in the Southwest, where Texas's admission to the Union and the American sense of manifest destiny would spark war with Mexico two years later? The available records do not seem to support such a contention: the Cadets and the Baltimore Independent Greys went blithely about their business during the middle years of the decades, and took no notice of the possibility of war in their records. Another interpretation of the passage would be that he is describing an idealized present in which America's militia volunteers demonstrated their martial valor and skill in the safety of peacetime. This mythic present was marked by the rich symbolism of the Washington monument and the sublime music of the brass bands.

¹¹⁶ Maryland Cadets Record Books 1842-46, July 1844 entry, unnumbered.

¹¹⁷ "Fifth Annual Message: December 3, 1793," *The American Presidency Project*, University of California Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29435>.

—Chapter Five—

Get Off the Track, Old Dan Tucker: Patriotic Music in Minstrelsy and Reform, 1828-1848

The musical genres or styles that a historian might consider available for patriotic performance in antebellum America appears remarkably similar to the list of *popular* genres during the same period: a broad category subsuming commercial music and what Richard Crawford has termed “traditional” music.¹ Such a list might, in fact, seem a facsimile of the running lists of songs that publishers printed on sheet music covers during the period. These series enabled home performers to enjoy the satisfaction of completing a collection at the same time that they demonstrated the breadth of their performing skill to visitors. Early on in the sequence such covers might list only two or

¹ Crawford’s carefully thought-out tripartite system dividing music into classical, popular, and traditional spheres (like Wiley Hitchcock’s “cultivated” and “vernacular” before it) perhaps draws too clear a dividing line between print and oral transmission in distinguishing between “popular” and “traditional.” See Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 227-230; Chase, *America’s Music*, 142, 221-222, chap. 14; Katherine Meizel, “A Singing Citizenry: Popular Music and Civil Religion in America,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, no. 4 (Dec 2006): 497-503, esp. 498.

three songs, but they could grow much longer, like an 1842 example from Philadelphia titled “Evenings at Home: A Collection of Popular and esteemed Airs arranged as Duets on the Piano Forte” (Figure 5.1). For 25 cents apiece, the collector could own any of fifty different songs in the series, ranging from various kinds of dance music and tunes probably inspired by the rage for quartet singing (“Alpine Melody”), to minstrel tunes, in this case the popular “Lucy Long,” sung that same year by the Maryland Cadets during their Boston tour, and march forms like “Major Hillen’s Quick Step.”

1842 was an important year in American music: it was the year Abby Hutchinson joined her brothers onstage and the Hutchinson Family Singers began their meteoric rise to fame as touring musicians performing for the antislavery and temperance causes. The brass revolution, as we have seen, meant that martial music seemed to reverberate in every urban street and village hamlet. And by 1842, blackface minstrelsy was poised on the edge of its mid-century period of greatest success and significance: propelled into popularity by T.D. Rice and his “Jump Jim Crow” in 1828, the full-fledged minstrel show was about to emerge with the premier in late 1842-early 1843 of Dan Emmett’s Virginia Minstrels. At first glance, minstrelsy and reform music might seem irreconcilable: the highly secular music of blackface minstrels, with its broad mockery of contemporary social mores, its alternately nostalgic and parodic representations of slavery, and its focus on commercial entertainment, set against the sacral antislavery and moral messages of the Hutchinsons and their ilk. Yet both kinds of music found common ground in nationalist sentiment.

Performers like the Hutchinsons and Dan Emmett offered an entrée into nationalist sentiment through music that tapped into the fervor of the patriotic sublime,

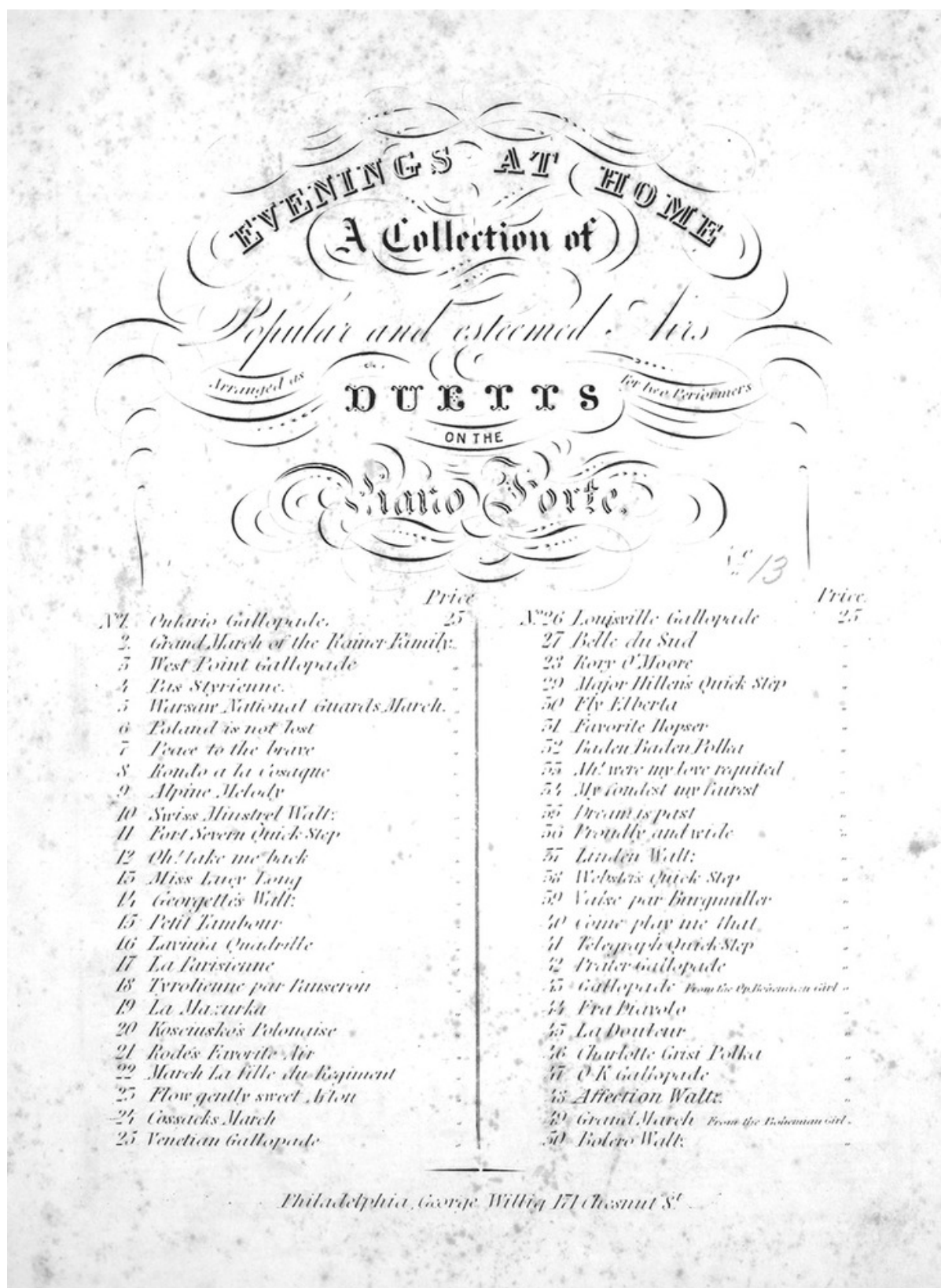


Figure 5.1. "Evenings at Home," sheet music cover (Philadelphia, 1842). Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

but was predicated on dissenting visions of American society. African American musicians like Philadelphia's Francis Johnson used the patriotic sublime, in the form of their own musical ensembles, on both national holidays and alternate patriotic celebrations like New York's Emancipation Day. Minstrelsy, reform music, and African American patriotic music thus intersected in distinct ways with the mythic present that was being consolidated by white militia bands and their audiences. Minstrel music's easy appropriability meant that its popular tunes could be fitted to patriotic lyrics. The outlook of evangelical reformers, with their vision of the perfectibility of the American character and their "religion of the heart, not the head," was suited to the patriotic sublime.²

Performers as diverse as blackface minstrels, black band musicians, and antislavery singers borrowed and blended tunes from the same sources, and performed their music in similar, even shared, spaces and to overlapping audiences. As politically disparate as their constituencies could be, their music still included similar patriotic valences. Furthermore, the Hutchinsons and Dan Emmetts of America rose to prominence along with the proliferation of brass and militia bands: minstrel music as well as abolitionist and temperance songs pivoted around the extraordinary *mélange* of band music in the streets. Indeed, band music joined minstrelsy and the politics of slavery with the phenomenon of free black musicians and bands. This chapter argues that even music representing contemporary social and political extremes tapped into the fervor of patriotic expression.³

² Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York, [1978] 1997), 28-29.

³ On patriotism in minstrelsy, see Saxton, *Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 177-179; Lott, *Love & Theft*, 215. On black band musicians, see Charles K. Jones, *Francis Johnson*, Randall M. Miller, John David Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 509-512; on the Hutchinsons and nationalism, see Gac, *Singing for Freedom*, 103, 136-137.

Minstrelsy relied on burlesque and a specifically northern white vision of black culture. White citizens, particularly urban working class whites, used it to ridicule southern slaves and northern free blacks, as well as what they saw as the pretentious striving of some other whites for refinement and moral improvement. With their crude black caricatures like “Jim Crow” and “Zip Coon,” their “stump speeches” mocking the jumped-up political speech of middle class moralizers, and their parodic sketches of plantation life, minstrel shows were the racist fruit of the Jacksonian Democracy and its imperialist vision of white supremacy. This valence of white superiority, over other races and encompassing the geography of America itself, aligned it with regional/national discourses like that of the burgeoning West that we explored in Chapter Three. Minstrelsy, having appropriated elements of black culture for its music while claiming to represent that culture, was itself easily appropriable. Its tunes were commercial entertainments that were readily available to be borrowed for purer purposes, as the Hutchinsons would prove by appropriating the minstrel tune “Old Dan Tucker” for their antislavery anthem “Get Off the Track.”⁴

Indeed, the popularity of minstrelsy and the performers of moral reform music highlights the importance of commercialization in nineteenth-century musical culture. In the 1790s and the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the nascent sheet music industry still catered largely to elites, simply because of cost. By the late 1820s, the sheet music trade was producing as many titles per year as it had in the entire period from 1787 (the date of the first sheet music publication in America) and 1800. This pattern was mirrored by the availability of pianos, which were being domestically produced as early

⁴ Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, chap. 6; Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*, 20-25; Lott, *Love & Theft*, 41-54; Toll, *Blackening Up*, chap. 1-2. On Jacksonian white supremacy, see Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 140; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 330.

as 1810 in Baltimore and by the 1840s were broadly available to the public, with its ever-burgeoning desire to demonstrate refinement through consumption. Simultaneously, commercial entertainments at an increasing profusion of live venues (including new venues like steamboats that reflected innovative transportation technology) all offered music in diverse genres. The boom in musical products for home consumption and the availability of commercial entertainments coincided with the crazes for minstrelsy, vocal quartets like the Hutchinsons, and the brass band revolution.⁵

Ready availability of music in print stimulated the market for live music. As we have seen, musicians and theatrical performers traveled lengthy circuits as early as the late eighteenth century: John Durang's journey to Canada and the peregrinations of performers like Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow in the new West provide ample evidence. But their picaresque accounts, particularly in retrospective memoirs, took great pains to represent the difficulty of early travel. By the 1830s and 1840s easier travel, more and better performance spaces, and not least the increasing availability of sheet music combined to make live performance both more available across the nation, more standardized between regions, and more transferable to the home.⁶ Popular commercial acts like minstrel companies and the Hutchinson family took full advantage of this environment, moving easily among American urban centers and traveling to England and other European countries.⁷ Moreover, popular entertainers, especially the blackface

⁵ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 230-236; Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business*, 7, 47-49; Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 403-404; Bushman, *Refinement of America*, chap. 8-9.

⁶ Musicologist John Spitzer analyzes the mixed transmission of a minstrel song orally and in print in "Oh! Susanna": Oral Transmission and Tune Transformation," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 1 (Spring 1994): 90-136.

⁷ Easier travel was especially evident by the 1850s: historian Katherine Preston notes the importance of new technology, the railroad, in facilitating the activities of traveling opera troupes, another important commercial genre of music in the mid-nineteenth century. See Katherine Preston, *Opera on the Road*, 212.

minstrels, continued the eclecticism of earlier traveling performers like John Durang: their shows featured a wide-ranging mix of different kinds of music, physical comedy, and melodrama.

The eclecticism of live performance combined with widely available commercial products like sheet music to reinforce the interconnection of popular musical forms and the ease of infusing them with nationalist sentiment. Music, even when associated with potentially divisive political issues like slavery, provided a distinctively flexible conduit between print and live performance, in a variety of public venues and in the ostensibly private space of the home, where the ready availability of patriotic songs in the form of sheet music turned the home into its own kind of civic space.⁸ Popular genres like minstrelsy thus circulated easily from commercial and public performance to home performance.

Private performances of patriotic music; minstrel songs in medleys or sets played at home or on the commercial stage; patriotic signifiers like flags and banners omnipresent on celebratory days, and informing the daily round of commercial performances as well as festooning sheet music illustrations; military band music set to minstrel melodies and sold as sheet music; tunesmiths in blackface appropriating patriotic language and symbols for broadly comic purposes: the various combinations multiplied and permeated American musical culture. At mid-century, it was not surprising to find a song appropriately titled a “Universal Medley,” that segued from “Dandy Jim from Caroline,” a minstrel song that burlesqued black dialect, straight into a “traditional” Irish tune, then into the ever-popular “Home Sweet Home” (from an English comic opera) and

⁸ David Waldstreicher, “Two Cheers for the ‘Public Sphere’ ...and One for Historians’ Skepticism,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61 no. 1 (Jan 2005): 109-110.

Dan Emmett's "Old Dan Tucker," only to finish with "Hail Columbia" and "The Star Spangled Banner," all in a rapid succession of two, four, and eight-bar phrases, relying on the performer's familiarity with quick bursts of melody to unify these otherwise disparate elements (Figure 5.2).⁹ This *mélange*, including its sources' race, class, and region, ironically created opportunities for affective patriotism to flourish nationwide.

Minstrelsy and Patriotism in Popular Song

As befitted a militiaman and veteran of the War of 1812, Abraham Emmett of Mount Vernon, Ohio named his two sons after celebrated war heroes: Lafayette, born in 1822, and his eldest son, Daniel Decatur, born in 1815. Daniel Decatur "Dan" Emmett, known today mostly as the author of 1860's "Dixie," national anthem of the Confederacy during the Civil War, was one of the progenitors of blackface minstrelsy, but his long career also demonstrates the intricate links between patriotic performance and popular music. Emmett began his musical career in the military, learning the fife and drum. When he later helped pioneer the minstrel show, he brought with him a deep knowledge of patriotic music. Just as theatrical figures like John Durang and Sol Smith had, Emmett's life and music shaped popular conceptions of patriotic sentiment and national identity. Emmett and others like him attached blackface to patriotic music, influencing it through

⁹ "Universal Medley," Levy Collection, Box 51, Item 105.

6

Brillante.

no placelike home there is no place like Hail Co-lum-bia hap-py land

Allegro Vivace.

Hail ye heroes heav'n-born band who Came to town de-odernight to see de show and see de fight De

Tender.

watchman dey were running round And I heard ole Tuckers ban-jo Still so gen-tly

o'er me steal....ing mem-ry will bring back the feel....ing

Figure 5.2. “Universal Medley” (Boston, 1853). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. On a single page the medley shifts from “Home, Sweet Home,” to “Hail, Columbia,” to “Old Dan Tucker.”

the complex and racially fraught performance and imagery of minstrelsy, the popularity of which constituted one of the nineteenth century's most important musical legacies.¹⁰

In 1828, Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice, prompted a craze with his “Jump Jim Crow” song and dance, an early depiction of a stock slave character who could be, in different incarnations, naïve and stupid, a swaggering southwestern frontiersman, and even a trickster character—often more than one of these at the same time.¹¹ The typical slave character's northern counterpart, an exaggerated caricature of a free black dandy made ridiculous by his pretension, followed in short order, popularized especially by George Washington Dixon's performances of the song “Zip Coon.” These central stock characters and others, popularized by individual artists and songs, were amalgamated into what became the minstrel show.

While minstrelsy first gained an audience thanks to individual songs and performers, its first incarnation as an ensemble show can be traced to Dan Emmett and three compatriots, who formed the Virginia Minstrels in New York in late 1842 or early 1843 (then performing in Boston in March 1843, as we saw in Chapter Four). In this classic form the four main performers, each with characteristic instrument (fiddle, banjo, tambourine, and “bones” (a set of bone castanets) were the central figures in a three-act show. Featuring comic, sentimental, even patriotic music, skits, speeches, juggling, and usually a third act send-up of southern plantation life, the minstrel show was an amalgamation of entertainments and a vehicle that encompassed the breadth of music and

¹⁰ Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 101-104.

¹¹ Rice insisted that his song and dance was based on those of an actual black man he chanced upon in the streets of Cincinnati (some accounts say Louisville), although this story is most likely apocryphal. The trickster element – Jim Crow figures “getting one over” on their masters – is perhaps most familiar in the later children's incarnation of Br'er Rabbit from the *Uncle Remus* stories. See Lott, *Love and Theft*, 58; Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 52.

stage entertainment.¹² Although this classic ideal of the minstrel show has tended to dominate historical analyses of the form, in practice minstrel performance was highly flexible. Blackface minstrels programmed their burlesques to comment on a wide variety of other genres, and thus incorporated many kinds of music in their shows, which they put on in a variety of spaces. In addition, as befitted such commercial music, it was responsive to audiences' desires. As one historian has described minstrelsy, "it had no set script, character development, plot, or musical score, allowing more of [audiences'] participation."¹³

Popular minstrel songs and their race, class, and gender stereotypes incorporated the ambivalence of blackface minstrel performance. In his classic treatment of the minstrel phenomenon, Eric Lott describes this ambivalence as "a simultaneous drawing up and crossing of racial boundaries:

Minstrel performers often attempted to repress through ridicule the real interest in black cultural practices they nonetheless betrayed – minstrelsy's mixed erotic economy of celebration and exploitation... what my title loosely terms 'love and theft.' The very form of blackface acts – an investiture in black bodies – seems a manifestation of the particular desire to try on the accents of 'blackness' and demonstrates the permeability of the color line.¹⁴

If permeable, that line was ambivalent as well: minstrelsy was also the performance of whiteness. Historian David Roediger has argued that blackface minstrels were "the first self-consciously *white* entertainers in the world."¹⁵ While ostensibly appropriating, even championing, "authentic" black culture, their disguises actually heightened their

¹² See for example Toll, *Blacking Up*, 25-36; Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, chap. 11; Hamm, *Yesterdays*, chap. 6.

¹³ Butsch, *Making of American Audiences*, 81-94, quote on 91.

¹⁴ Lott, *Love & Theft*, 6. I follow Lott in noting the key concept of "ambivalence" from the scholarship on postcolonialism, as described by Homi Bhabha. See Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question..." *Screen* 24, no. 6 (November 1983): 29.

¹⁵ Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 117.

whiteness: especially when, for example, minstrel playbills printed pictures of “respectable” white performers alongside their crudely caricatured blackface personas.¹⁶ The tunes were also ambivalent: the music heightened the impact of their racial mockery, but some minstrels insisted that it was drawn from black culture and intended to celebrate it.¹⁷

Minstrel stereotypes like the figure of the urban dandy Zip Coon encoded a racialized critique of class hierarchies (see Figure 5.3). Costumed in lavishly fine clothes and twirling a pair of spectacles on his finger, his outlandish dress and exaggerated stance highlight his social pretension: Zip Coon claims a refined, genteel status disallowed by his race. The caustic commentary’s racial ridicule targeted free blacks, but Zip Coon’s pretensions also lampooned the upper-class white dandy and all those strove too hard for refinement. As minstrel historian Dale Cockrell aptly puts it, “the genius of the song [“Zip Coon”], from the perspective of the white working-class audience, was its ability to ridicule both up and down the social ladder simultaneously.”¹⁸

The pliability of the minstrel form meant that it easily encompassed a patriotic valence, incorporating national symbols like flags among its cornucopia of cultural symbolism. Its typologies of region, like the sentimentalized plantation sketch that usually constituted the final act of the classic minstrel show, and its burlesque of regional characters like Jim Crow, who blended the submissive slave with the admirable qualities of the rough, self-sufficient Westerner, the urban Zip Coon, and even the prototypical white Yankee, could be pitched to nationalist purpose, signaling, even in parody, *e*

¹⁶ Ibid, 117. Roediger notes one example where these side-by-side images were labeled “As Plantation Darkeys” and “As Citizens.”

¹⁷ Toll, *Blackening Up*, 36; Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 159-188.

¹⁸ Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*, 94, chap. 4 *passim*. See also Toll, *Blackening Up*, 71-72.



Figure 5.3. "Zip Coon," sheet music cover (New York, 1834). Music Division, Library of Congress.

pluribus unum.¹⁹ Minstrel music was entering a conversation about whether “authentic” black music was an expression of an American national character.²⁰

Finally, minstrel performers and their audiences were attuned to the patriotic sublime, and, reciprocally, minstrel music, like most kinds of music, became an important part of patriotic practices. The complexity of minstrelsy as a cultural form, with heartfelt patriotism as one important strand, can be seen in one of the outcomes of the 1834 antislavery riots in New York. A protest at the Bowery Theatre, prompted by an English actor’s insults, was finally quieted when the manager ran on stage waving a pair of American flags and calling for impromptu performances of “Yankee Doodle” and “Zip Coon.”²¹ His action was no surprise, given how highly attuned minstrel performers were to their audiences. Of course, in the end, audiences wanted entertainment and the excitement of patriotic celebration was, in minstrelsy, a key part of the fun.

Dan Emmett’s *ad hoc* vocational training as a musician during his childhood in a frontier town and his formative years in the young West embodied the easy interpenetration of musical forms in everyday life, as well as the deep influence of the military on musicians, professional and amateur, in the United States. Militia drums and fifes formed the aural background of his rustic childhood, along with hymns and the fiddle dances that were omnipresent in taverns, as well as gatherings such as weddings

¹⁹ Bean, Hatch, McNamara, eds., *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 96-97; Winifred Morgan, *An American Icon: Brother Jonathan and American Identity* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988), 60-62; Placentino, *C.M. Haille’s “Pardon Jones” Letters*, 1-19.

²⁰ The degree to which minstrels borrowed musical structures from African Americans is still debated. Their songs also had Irish, Scottish, and English antecedents. See Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, esp. chap. 12; Lott, *Love and Theft*, 6.

²¹ The British actor, George Farren, had, it was reported, “punched a local butler, insulted the American flag, ‘cursed the Yankees, and called them jackasses, and said he would gull them whenever he could.” The 1834 riot foreshadowed the infamous 1849 riot at the Astor Place Opera House, which was also sparked by a perceived slight from a British actor. See Lott, *Love & Theft*, 136; Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (Oxford, [1984] 2004), 265.

and even impromptu events, such as fiddle music played as an accompaniment to brawls.²² Emmett was a self-taught musician. He enlisted as a fifer in the U.S. Army in 1834 while working at a printer's office in Cincinnati: only eighteen, he lied about his age to appear eligible. Emmett was stationed originally at the barracks just across the river from the city in Newport, Kentucky, "the then school of practice for the western department."²³ Not limiting himself to the fife, he "practiced the drum incessantly...and made myself master of the 'Duty' and every known 'side beat' then in use." This encompassed the range of intricate drum beats that governed life in a military camp, from the "reveille" early in the morning to the day-closing "tattoo" at 9:00 P.M.²⁴

After being discharged from the army when officials discovered he was underage, Emmett remained interested in military music throughout his life.²⁵ Military music pervaded his own career and influenced his minstrel music, drawing it into the orbit of patriotic musical performance. Emmett drafted, although did not publish, a drum instruction manual sometime before the Civil War, and was coauthor of the *Drummer's and Fifer's Guide*, published in 1862, while he also worked as a drum and fife instructor on Governor's Island in New York during the day while performing for Christy's Minstrels at night.²⁶

²² Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 102-106; N.N. Hill, Jr., *History of Knox County, Ohio* (Mt. Vernon, Ohio: A.A. Graham, 1881), 220, 350.

²³ Quoted in Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 8-9, 47.

²⁴ Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 107-108.

²⁵ He also spent time traveling with circuses as a band musician, including in the troupe of Dan Rice at one point. See Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 9.

²⁶ *Drummer's and Fifer's Guide*, Daniel Decatur Emmett Papers, Mss 355, Box 1, Folder 4, Ohio Historical Society; "Emmett's Standard Drummer," Daniel Decatur Emmett Papers, Mss 355, Box 1A, Folder 4, Ohio Historical Society; James Clark, *Connecticut's Fife and Drum Tradition* (Middletown, Ct., 2011), 61.

His guide illustrated the pervasive influence of brass bands and the easy exchange between styles as diverse as military field music, brass band music, and minstrelsy. A fiddler on the minstrel stage, Emmett, an expert drummer and fifer, was also quite familiar with brass instruments. The collection's many quick steps indicate the martial origin of that popular brass band march genre. Like others, Emmett named his tunes after places, many of which involved battle victories and military figures, like "Fort McHenry," "Col. Robertson's Welcome," or "Major Riley's."²⁷ A historian of field music identifies in Emmett's book the "extraverted [*sic*] brass band virtuoso style of the then famous cornet soloist Edward Kendall," including its "widespread arpeggiations, and some of the harmonic language of the brass bands." Flashy arpeggiation, a difficult technique for amateur wind musicians, showcased the brilliance of the new brass sound. The songs in the collection also "hint at...harmonic refinements that were the common musical language of the mid-nineteenth century," in lieu of the "rustic character" of older modal melodies.²⁸ Readers of printed military field music were thus reminded of the new and astonishing virtuosity of professional brass musicians like Ned Kendall, in a harmonic language that was familiar not only in band music, but also in minstrelsy and many other forms.

²⁷ *Drummer's and Fifer's Guide* (1862), Emmett Papers, OHS.

²⁸ Clark, *Connecticut's Fife and Drum Tradition*, 99-101. An arpeggio is a figure in which the notes of a chord are played in sequence. A common figuration for piano and other stringed instruments, it was a noticeable element of wind band music (whose instruments could only sound one note at a time and thus relied on ensemble playing for chordal figurations). Arpeggiation with keyed instruments also bore resemblance to the horn calls or fanfares in the harmonic sequence, figures common to the old natural brass instruments. It could thus look back to an older style at the same time it was familiar in its present configuration among the new bands, with their keyed or valved instruments. See Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development*, 4th Edition (Don Mills, Toronto, Ontario, 1993), chap. 5; Keith Polk, et al, "Band," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40774>. cf. Charles John Vincent, *The Brass Band and How to Write for It* (New York: T.J. Donlan, 1908), 125.

Among his manuscripts, Emmett saved at least one individual brass band part until his death. Such evidence representing actual band instrumental practice is rare: these handwritten scraps were copied out for individual player's reference and then usually discarded. This one records a "reveille" bugle call apparently written for an E flat cornet or cornopean, a high-soprano-pitched valved brass instrument.²⁹ Emmett's lifelong familiarity with the elements, materials, and practices of military informed his music – and through it musical culture writ large.

One of Dan Emmett's most famous songs, "Old Dan Tucker," shows the reciprocal influence of blackface minstrelsy and patriotic music.³⁰ Blackface representation in patriotic song was not new: As early as 1814, "Backside Albany" depicted the American naval victory over Britain on Lake Champlain in the words of a black sailor in an exaggerated "negro" dialect. The song, extolling the might of American arms, foreshadowed the discursive influence of minstrel music on patriotic culture, and vice versa.³¹ "Backside Albany" was even reprinted in sheet music as late as 1837.³² "Old

²⁹ Cornet/cornopean part, Box 2, Folder 21, Daniel Decatur Emmett Papers, Mss 355, OHS.

³⁰ The authorship of the tune of "Dan Tucker" (not the lyrics) is disputed, and in fact Emmett may have borrowed the tune himself. Like many minstrel songs, there is argument as to what extent it is based on African American or Anglo American oral tradition (or entirely new). Its traditional origin story, in which Emmett wrote the song during his teenage years in Ohio and performed it in blackface for a traveling show – interestingly, on the Fourth of July – was told by Emmett to his first biographer and is possibly apocryphal. As Charles Hamm writes of early minstrelsy as a whole: "[minstrel songs] were undoubtedly drawn from traditional Anglo-American melodies stored in his memory, single tunes or several patched together; if any were original, they were patterned closely on the same tune tradition.... Thus Emmett and other early minstrel performers were more adapters than composers." Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 130 (and chap. 6 *passim*); Robert B. Winans, "Early Minstrel Show Music," in Glenn Loney, ed., *Music Theatre in America* (Westport, Conn., 1984); Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 128n10; see also H. Ogden Wintermute, *Daniel Decatur Emmett* (Mt. Vernon, OH, 1955), 27; Hal Rammel, *Nowhere in America: The Big Rock Candy Mountain and Other Comic Utopias* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 91.

³¹ Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, chap. 3; William J. Mahar, "'Backside Albany' and Early Blackface Minstrelsy: A Contextual Analysis of America's First Blackface Song," *American Music* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 1-27.

³² This sheet music version belied the patriotic content of the song in favor of capitalizing on the then-current minstrel craze by illustrating it with a stock "Jim Crow"-like figure, *sans* patriotic imagery of any sort. See "Backside Albany: A Comic Song," (New York, 1837), Levy Collection, Box 18, Item 12. Printed in New York.

Dan Tucker,” Emmet’s original showpiece for the Virginia Minstrels, is a song familiar to Americans even today, and was one of the most popular songs of the mid-century minstrel boom, as evidenced by its appropriation for seemingly every conceivable musical use, including the patriotic.³³

Musically, “Dan Tucker” lent itself to borrowing, and to the strong emotions often associated with patriotic display. Like most minstrel songs, it is repetitious and simple, relying on an insistent rhythmic pulse leading to the “climactic point of arrival” of the refrain’s shouted call-and-response “Get out de way!, Ole Dan Tucker:” an “offbeat jolt” that represents an emotional release from the rhythmic drive of the verse. Its melody is almost non-existent; Richard Crawford observes that “nearly three-quarters of its syllables are sung on the same note.” This has the effect of turning whatever text is set to the tune (and there were many) into a rhythmic recitation or declamation.³⁴ It was a very malleable tune: not only easy to sing and sing along to, but also suitable for multiple appropriations and inclusion in medleys.

One medley of minstrel tunes (rather unimaginatively titled “Negro Medley”) published by a Baltimore printer in 1844 was a piano arrangement that included “Dan Tucker” and other favorites, mimicked the rhythmic snap of the original with its simple chords. In the “Dan Tucker” section, the arrangement’s dynamic markings emphasize the forceful and joyous release of the refrain: the melody of the verse is marked piano, with a

³³ “Old Dan Tucker” has outlived its initial minstrel phrase to become, like the “Arkansaw Traveler,” a well-known piece of folk or vernacular music in twenty-first century America. The extent to which it has become subsumed into American folk culture can be seen in Bruce Springsteen’s version, part of his 2006 *Seeger Sessions* album of covers of Pete Seeger’s *oeuvre*. In Springsteen’s hands, the song with its cleaned-up lyrics has become a joyous, medium-tempo anthem and sing-along: a live performance in Italy by Springsteen’s multiethnic Seeger Sessions band shows the Italian crowd singing the refrain without prompting (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-GHbDFrwlU>).

³⁴ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 207-208.

sudden shift to fortissimo in the first measure of the refrain (in a version with words, this corresponds to the “Get out de way!” phrase), then suddenly back to piano (“Ole Dan Tucker”), again fortissimo (“Get out de way!”), back to piano again in the next measure, and a final sudden shift to fortissimo for the triumphant end of the refrain, comprising the entire line of the lyric at a markedly loud volume: “Get out de way!, Old Dan Tucker, you’re too late to get your supper.”³⁵

The music, as an aural artifact, was part of a larger cultural construct. This fact is evident in its printed form: its dynamic markings were meant to be *read* by the pianist, probably at home. The construct included, moreover, reminders of public performance: the medley was arranged by G.W. Minnick, a member (possibly the leader) of the recently-formed band of the Independent Greys (see Figure 5.4). Its cover trumpeted the medley’s military association almost as prominently as the song title itself: “as performed by the Independent Greys Band.” The arrangement’s construction, with its insistent rhythm and sudden fortissimos, were aural markers for a remembered performance by the military band, linking the home to public performance.³⁶ Examples of the routes traced by music through performance and commercial spaces abound, as did their circulation in print. For example, an 1844 “advertorial” plugged another piano arrangement, a highly topical piece called the “Tariff Quick Step” (a march), from 1844. Advertised, like the

³⁵ In one set of lyrics; there were many different variations of the lyrics during the period.

³⁶ “Negro Medley,” (Baltimore, 1844), Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 52. Amazingly, the previous year (1843) saw another appropriation of “Dan Tucker” from a Baltimore militia band: in this case, James M. Deems Independent Blues Band. In this case, Deems was both composer and arranger of a quickstep based on Emmett’s tune, the “Old Dan Tucker Quick Step.” Like the Minnick piece from the following year, Deems’ arrangement was prominently advertised “as performed by the Independent Blues Band.” See “Old Dan Tucker,” (Baltimore, 1843), *Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1820 to 1860*, Music Division, Library of Congress.

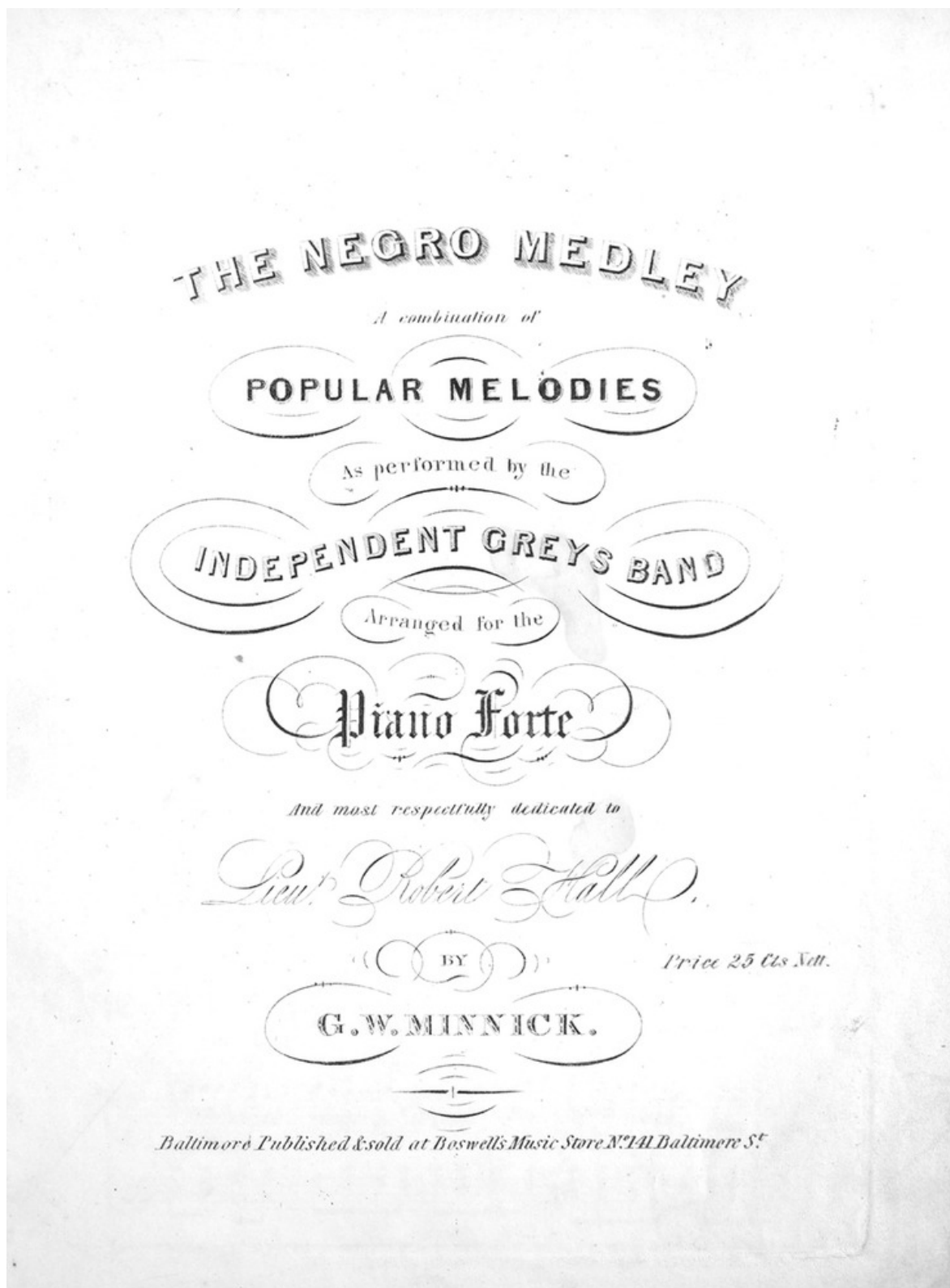


Figure 5.4. "Negro Medley," sheet music cover (Baltimore, 1844). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

“Negro Medley,” “as performed by the Independent Greys Band,” it was written amidst the rancorous political atmosphere engendered by the Tariff of 1842.³⁷

Popular minstrel tunes like “Dan Tucker” were widely adapted for use as partisan political songs. As illustrated by songs like “Adams and Liberty,” which borrowed “Anacreon in Heaven” long before Francis Scott Key did, such political uses of tunes had long been common practice, and partisan campaigns continued to make claims of patriotic virtue throughout the nineteenth century by using well-known patriotic tunes. In the politically contentious mid-nineteenth century, political use of commercial music was especially colorful, and a catchy popular song like “Dan Tucker” could even serve opposing political forces. Henry Clay supporters renamed it “Old Kentucky” in 1844, under which name it was published as sheet music and in songsters. In one songster (the *Clay Minstrel: Or, National Songster*) of that year, “Ole Dan Tucker” appeared three times with different lyrics, setting the tunes “Whigs of the Union,” “The Little Red Fox” (mocking the “Kinderhook Fox,” Martin Van Buren), and “Old Kentucky” (here listed as “Get Out of the Way!”) In his apologia for the songster, the compiler hints at the ease with which songs could be appropriated: “the *Songs* are by various authors. Some of them have been written expressly for the Minstrel; others have been gleaned from the public journals, and other publications of the day.”³⁸ Another sheet music medley from the 1844 campaign compiled several patriotic songs supporting Clay, including one

³⁷ The article engages in a series of heavy-handed tariff puns: “Being a piece of ‘domestic manufacture,’ and therefore not chargeable with ‘import duty,’ the fair patriots of the piano will feel it to be their ‘duty’ to purchase the article, and thus afford substantial ‘protection’ to the artist in the increase of his ‘revenue.’ Go a-shopping, and convert Minnick’s ‘tariff quick step’ into ‘a tariff for revenue, with incidental protection.’” *Baltimore Sun*, July 20, 1844; “Tariff Quick Step,” Music Division, Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1820 to 1860, LOC. A song also published in Baltimore during an earlier tariff controversy in 1833 had lyrics in the minstrel negro dialect, and was sung by a minstrel character: “Uncle Sam’s Cuffee.” See “Save the Union!” (Baltimore: John Cole, 1833), Levy Collection, Box 16, Item 4.

³⁸ “Old Kentucky,” (New York: Firth & Hall, n.d.), Box 4, Item 85, Levy Collection; *The Clay Minstrel: or, National Songster* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait, 1844).

called “Clear de Way for Ole Kentucky” that was a minstrel knock-off of “Dan Tucker,” resembling the more famous song rhythmically and lyrically. This edition advertised its versatility as an appropriate tune in both public and private settings: it was “written and adapted for the parlour and public meetings.”³⁹ Such far-flung uses speak to the plasticity of both song and the musical world in which it traveled so widely. “Dan Tucker” traced a spatial path that illustrates how the patriotic sublime spread from civic spaces into ostensibly private ones, and among partisan groups, unifying them culturally if not politically through music.

The adaptability of “Dan Tucker” was matched by its staying power. In 1848, it became “Rough and Ready / A Patriotic Song” in support of Zachary Taylor, extolling “Ol’ Rough and Ready”’s heroism in the Mexican War. “Ole Dan Tucker” was used, to give only a handful of examples, by supporters of John Fremont to attack James Buchanan in 1856; by supporters of both Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan during the Civil War; and as late as 1900, as a campaign song for William Jennings Bryan.⁴⁰ Instead of the musical contrast of the 1790s, when Democratic Republicans sympathetic to France were roused by the “Marseillaise,” while Federalists who supported Britain had “The President’s March,” nineteenth-century political partisans happily set different rancorous verses to the same well-known strains of Emmett’s tune. And the divergent

³⁹ “Clear de Way for Ole Kentucky,” (New York: George F. Nesbitt, 1844), Levy Collection, Box 4, Item 15.

⁴⁰ “Rough and Ready,” (Boston: W.H. Oaks & E.H. Wade, 1847), Box 4, Item 106, 1847, and “McClellan and Victory!,” (n.p., n.d.) Box 193, Item 148 (the McClellan song is a handbill), Levy Collection; Robert E. May, *Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 131; Ray B. Browne, Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr., *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: The Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 130; Roger L. Welsch, *A Treasury of Nebraska Pioneer Folklore* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, [1939] 1984), 78.

political uses of just this one song represents only one example of the realm of the patriotic sublime.

Patriotic celebration pulled in minstrel tunes alongside other forms of patriotic music without distinction. Recall, for example, the impromptu singing of the minstrel tune “Lucy Long” at the militia dinner in Boston in 1842. Minstrel tunes were performed in more formal settings as well. Wind band concerts commonly featured song medleys like the “Negro Medley” mentioned earlier. A different “Negro Medley” was scored sometime around 1840 by Raphael Triay, leader of the United States Marine Band (this was variously titled “Negro Medley Overture” or “Ethiopian Medley Overture”). It is likely the piece listed as “Negro Medley” and played by the “celebrated” Washington Brass Band at an 1844 concert in Philadelphia.⁴¹

This long concert was itself a medley of myriad styles of popular ballads, comic songs, and patriotic music, including “Washington’s March” and a medley of “National Airs” which likely encompassed some of the best-known patriotic songs like “Hail Columbia,” “Yankee Doodle,” and “The Star Spangled Banner.” Played by a brass band in a military arrangement, the “Negro Medley” was part of the grand pageantry of the occasion. A similar concert in Baltimore in 1848, at the Universalist Church on Calvert Street, featured the Independent Blues Band (no longer led by James Deems at this point) and yet another “Negro Medley Overture” as the concert’s finale.⁴² For the audience,

⁴¹ *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, December 25, 1844. This score featured the keyed bugle in prominent solo parts. See Dudgeon, *Keyed Bugle*, 173, 213n32; see also the web page of period performers Olde Towne Brass of Huntsville, Alabama at http://www.otbrass.com/PublishedMusic/Notes/E_Page.html (accessed 1/27/2015).

⁴² *Baltimore Sun*, February 28, 1848. It is impossible to determine if this “Negro Medley Overture” is the 1844 piece arranged by the Baltimore Independent Greys’ G.W. Minnick, the Triay score, or another piece entirely. Variations of the title were used for many medleys, including, for example: “Ethiopian Medley,” New York, 1848, Music Division, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1848.101930/>; and “Ethiopian Medley no. 1,” (Baltimore, 1846), Music Division, LOC,

such musical events juxtaposed patriotic music and symbols with popular music: the familiar sonic qualities of the martial brass band merging with the infectious rhythms of minstrel tunes and other popular forms.

Among their many kinds of burlesque, minstrels lampooned the “refined” style of European virtuosos. But these imitations tended also to elicit approval of the minstrel’s skill.⁴³ The Congo Melodists, a popular minstrel troupe, toured with a child violin prodigy who performed in blackface as Little Ole Bull: they joined the “Dan Tucker” phenomenon with a similar song in the mid-1840s titled “Ole Bull and Ole Dan Tucker.”⁴⁴ At least one of the Melodists’ performances while touring in Baltimore advertised the martial genre of “Quick Steps” as an attraction among the songs on offer, while a reviewer in New York focused on Little Ole Bull’s expertise and the success of his and the Congo Melodists’ concert: “everything went off with the greatest *éclat*. Little Ole set free all but one of his strings, and played some beautiful strains on the violin.”⁴⁵

By the early 1850s, minstrelsy had cemented its place as a highly popular cultural form. It was also infused with patriotic performance to the point that contemporaries evidently thought of it as a kind of national music. Sheet music from the early 1850s, in the popular medley genre, illustrates the interpenetration of patriotic music and commercial blackface tunes. The “Real American Polka” was almost entirely minstrel tunes, including Dan Emmett’s “Going Over the Mountain” and “Old Dan Tucker,” as well as “the celebrated Railroad Overture as performed by Jullien’s Band,” themed to

<http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1846.061500/>. Vera Brodsky Lawrence mentions a “Negro Medley credited to Daniel Emmett” performed by a brass band in New York at Castle Garden during the summer of 1844: see Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 283.

⁴³ Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 286, 555; Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, 342.

⁴⁴ “Ole Bull and Ole Dan Tucker,” (New York, Boston, 1844), LOC, Music Division.

⁴⁵ *Baltimore Sun*, May 31, 1844; *New York Herald*, December 26, 1844.

promote America's new transportation technology.⁴⁶ These tunes, it is apparent, were thought to represent American national culture. Another piece of sheet music, titled "Music for the Millions" and printed in New York, San Francisco, and London, included Stephen Foster's parlor minstrel song "Old Folks at Home" among patriotic favorites like "Hail to the Chief" and "Yankee Doodle."⁴⁷ Sheet music productions like these inculcated affective patriotism not only by placing minstrel songs alongside well-known patriotic tunes, but also by associating them in memory with nationalist images like flags, banners, and patriotic transparencies so common in live performances.

Black Musicians, White Audiences

As white actors and musicians blacked up to perform their racist burlesques, black musicians worked as valued, even celebrated musicians in martial settings. If white minstrels in blackface were performing whiteness at the same time they purported to represent authentic black music, then black musicians, by playing patriotic music, were performing both their blackness and their status as citizens. By playing patriotic music, they asserted membership in the national community, and at the same time attempted to undermine that community's white supremacy. Black musicians performed as military field musicians, in marching bands for national holidays (including specific African American holidays), and even in genteel concert settings and their own volunteer militia

⁴⁶ "The Real American Polka," (London: Leoni Lee and Coxhead, n.d.), Box 59, Item 36, Levy Collection. On the railroad and American identity, see David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, chap. 3.

⁴⁷ "Music for the Millions" was actually a renamed version of Louis-Antoine Jullien's "American Quadrille." "Old Folks at Home" is still familiar today, often as "Swanee River" after its first line. See "Music for the Millions," (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853), Levy Collection, Box 14 Item 035.

units. They did so despite frequent white disparagement of their accomplishments and tensions over mixed race participation in civic celebrations.⁴⁸

Free black Americans were soldiers, and especially musician-soldiers, going back to the Seven Years War, and were prominent during the Revolution. For example, one Juba Freeman, who served in the Continental Army's Connecticut Line during the Revolution,⁴⁹ was a drummer. A Virginia Act from 1776 stipulated that blacks "shall be employed as drummers, fifers, or pioneers." The names of these black musicians were rarely known: typical citations simply referred to, for example, "a negro man" or "Negro Bob, drummer." But the evidence points to the importance of black drummers and fifers to both the regular army and the militia. For example, a black drummer named Jordan B. Noble was congratulated by Andrew Jackson himself after the Battle of New Orleans in 1815: he reportedly "beat his drum during all and every fight, in the hottest hell of the fire."⁵⁰ After the War of 1812, as the brass band revolution gathered momentum nationwide, blacks formed their own bands in New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Charleston, Michigan, Ohio, and the New England states.⁵¹

When the young printer's assistant Dan Emmett joined the army in 1834, he benefitted immediately from black musicianship. According to his account, he "practiced

⁴⁸ The most complete picture of antebellum black band culture is in Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York: Norton, [1971] 1997), esp. chap. 4. Southern writes that "the few names that have come down to us represent only the tip of the iceberg" (111). See also Ann Ostendorf, *Sounds American: National Identity and the Music Cultures of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, 1800-1860* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), esp. 130; and Aaron Horne, *Brass Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), esp. 142-143. Cf. Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 2007), 17-18.

⁴⁹ *Revolutionary War documents for Juba Freeman*, Gladstone Collection, Manuscript Division, LOC.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 63-67 (quote on 66).

⁵¹ All quotes in this paragraph from Emmett G. Price III, Tammy L. Kernodle, Horace J. Maxile, Jr., eds., *Encyclopedia of African American Music, vol. III* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 580.

the drum under the tuition of the renowned John J. Clark, also known as “Juba.”⁵²

Emmett’s relationship with Clark was not just as teacher to student: Clark was almost certainly his superior officer, as the name of a quickstep in his 1862 fifer’s manual attests: “Drum Major Juba Clark’s Army Quickstep.”⁵³ By 1834, Emmett had already written at least one minstrel song, likely more than one, salted with the crude dialect typical of minstrelsy. But for Emmett, respect, even friendship, for his black military tutor was not incompatible with his comic blackface renditions. This is Eric Lott’s “love and theft” not only in representation but in musical practice. Emmett, as a minstrel performer, believed himself to be honoring the authenticity of what he and others considered a form of music that borrowed from traditional black music, but now appropriated for commercial entertainment and profit. Perhaps patriotic music allowed Emmett (and Juba Clark, for that matter) to express openly the aspirations toward refinement and middle-class uplift that the commercial minstrel stage tended to mask or ridicule.

The intersection of race and patriotism at varied sites of musical performance reached its apotheosis in the person of Francis Johnson of Philadelphia, who was probably the most celebrated antebellum black musician and the best-known brass band leader in the country before Boston’s Ned Kendall. Johnson’s astonishing musical career, centered in Philadelphia, but resounding nationally and internationally, celebrated the patriotic sublime at the same time it reflected societal ambivalences about race, national

⁵² Quoted in Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 105; this quote is from the manuscript to his unpublished drummer’s guide. See also Gilbert Chase, *America’s Music*, 269; Mark Knowles, *Tap Roots: The Early History of Tap Dancing* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002); “juba, n.2”. OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101821?rskey=37ek2a&result=2&isAdvanced=false> (accessed February 01, 2015). “Juba” or “Juber” was also a dance form.

⁵³ Emmett, *Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide*, Emmett Papers, OHS.

identity, and patriotic celebration. Johnson's success can be traced in large part to two things: first, his own musical genius, and second (thanks to his talent) his status as protégé to some of the most powerful families in Philadelphia, most notably Phoebe Ann Ridgway Rush (wife of James Rush, the son of Benjamin Rush). Rush, as well as the Willing, Biddle, and Wharton families, "were but a few of the families that avidly admired Johnson's music-making and demanded that he and his band preside over their balls and levees."⁵⁴

The position of Johnson's band as an equal to white bands was reflected in public notices and advertisements in Philadelphia and across the country, which were for the most part indistinguishable from those pertaining to the band's white counterparts. "Francis Johnson's unrivalled band" was a key selling point in an 1839 ad for a "Grand Military, Firemen's, and Citizen's Ball" in Philadelphia – the ad also emphasized the event's proud patriotism with an opening encomium to "The Star Spangled Banner, the Pride of the World."⁵⁵ Similarly, Johnson's Baltimore engagements in 1831 were preceded by anticipatory praise, in language familiar to audiences of white performers:

THE MILITARY BAND, attached to Capt. Page's Company of State Fencibles of Philadelphia, and led by Francis Johnson, the celebrated performer on the Kent Bugle, will visit this city...for the purpose of giving *CONCERTS*. We learn that the performances of this body of musicians have been very successful and highly spoken of in New York, Boston and many other cities. Their leader is well known to the

⁵⁴ Charles K. Jones, *Francis Johnson*, 57-60. Jones's is the only extant biography of this fascinating and surprisingly little-known figure; the other invaluable resource is the University of Pennsylvania Library system's online exhibit about Johnson, drawing from their physical holdings, at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/music/fjohnson/fjohnson.html> (last accessed March 4, 2015). In broad musical histories of the period, Richard Crawford's comprehensive work gives Johnson a brief but sensitive examination (see Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 279;423-425).

⁵⁵ It should be noted that this ball, a club fund-raising event titled "The Star-Spangled Banner, the pride of the world," was an example of a patriotic event not associated with any particular national celebration. See *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, October 13, 1839.

fashionable world, and his talents...are such as to elicit the favourable opinion of the community, and will no doubt meet with liberal support and patronage.⁵⁶

Johnson and his band, whether playing marches and other martial music or the steady stream of dance music that flowed from his pen, seemed to meet with success everywhere.

The same ad may also have been a covert demand, against a background of prejudice, that Johnson receive proper patronage despite his race. Indeed, white resistance to Johnson's civic performances in public spaces usually occupied by white bands, occurred despite (or perhaps because of) his success. Johnson's race was never forgotten. A laconic note in a New Orleans paper on news reported trouble in New York when Johnson's band accompanied a New York militia company on a July 4th outing to Albany: "The Gothamites...would not let the colored band play along the streets, and another was employed."⁵⁷ Whites in Baltimore were similarly resistant when white volunteer militia companies began hiring black bands for public events: an editorialist reported that black bands' "appearance on the parade-ground, has occasioned many unpleasant occurrences."⁵⁸ Johnson's untimely death in 1844 elicited glowing memorials that openly referenced the prejudice he faced. A "special meeting of the Young Men of the city and county of Philadelphia" adopted a forceful resolution in his honor, which read in part "[Johnson] has eminently and successfully proved that genius is sufficiently powerful to overcome *even prejudice*."⁵⁹ Even in his native city, and despite his glittering

⁵⁶ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, October 26, 1831; see also *Baltimore Patriot*, November 4, 1831.

⁵⁷ *New Orleans Times Picayune*, July 14, 1838.

⁵⁸ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, October 6, 1835.

⁵⁹ *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, April 10, 1844; italics in original. The prestigious Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania published a separate memorial of "their late fellow member, Capt. Francis Johnson." The resolution lauded Johnson for his "unflinching integrity and correct deportment as a man,

connections, Johnson faced racial prejudice when he and his band performed the same patriotic practices as white bands like those of Baltimore Independent Blues and Greys.

Indeed, genteel whites could engage in racial stereotyping of the refined Johnson: appreciation (like Dan Emmett's for his early tutor Juba Clark) could be tinged with condescension or outright scorn. Isaac Mickle, a genteel young Philadelphian and eager scholar who hired Johnson for violin lessons wrote in his diary that when he first met "the famous Frank Johnson" at a fashionable riverboat excursion in 1841, "Frank and I got pretty well acquainted and I found him to be very intelligent for a negro."⁶⁰ At his first appointment with Johnson, he was led upstairs by a servant, whom he described offhandedly as a "young ape."⁶¹ While Mickle noted Johnson's air of refinement, the tone of his diary entry was one of casual racism. Others could be even cruder.⁶² During Johnson's British tour in 1837, which was generally well-received, one commentator wrote: "Who will now say that niggers cannot be cultivated?...We will swear that this is a saintly speculation; and it will not be long before we have some genuine sable persons. We are informed that they are self-taught, as frogs are to croak..."⁶³ Johnson's fame made such blatantly racist dismissals rare in his case, but tensions were not uncommon when black musicians played for white audiences, possibly because black musicians

and disinterested zeal in behalf of this institute, [which] has endeared him to each of its members." It was published in both the *Ledger* and the *Philadelphia Elevator*.

⁶⁰ Philip English Mackey, ed., *A Gentleman of Much Promise: The Diary of Isaac Mickle, 1837-1845*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 186, 196. Historian Richard Brown characterizes Mickle as "a wealthy young man...whose tastes and talents made him a kind of ultimate consumer and participant in the information market." See Brown, *Knowledge is Power*, 219-229 (quote from p. 219).

⁶¹ Ibid, 196.

⁶² Mickle also provided an interesting verbal sketch of the musician's workspace, full of a profusion of musical accouterments including "bass drums, bass viols, bugles and trombones...in admirable confusion on the floor." Johnson, like Dan Emmett and most other musicians, was proficient with multiple instruments. See Mackey ed., *A Gentleman of Much Promise*, 196.

⁶³ Quoted in Jones, *Francis Johnson*, 161.

playing skillfully in civic arenas were making serious claims to civic manhood that belied the containment strategies of minstrel stereotypes.

Minstrel audiences were eager sheet music consumers: its vivid portrayals of racist stereotypes allowed many whites to insulate themselves against black civic claims. Covers of the “Crow Quadrilles” from New York and Baltimore feature a medley of blackface caricatures including the Jim Crow and Zip Coon figures (Figure 5.5). They also depict a black marching band in fine uniforms and an array of brass instruments, but prancing and stumbling around as they march. Black dandy figures including Zip Coon watch from the sidewalk.⁶⁴ In another sheet music cover caricature, black musicians representing the “dandyism of the northern states” are compared to the “Ethiopians of the Southern States,” also musicians (Figure 5.6). The northern blacks in their long-tailed finery and the rustic slaves are all portrayed with typically crude facial features and in exaggerated motion, prancing like the marching band in the “Crow Quadrilles.”

The crude burlesque of another song, “Jim Brown” (from 1837), is equally direct (see Figure 5.7).⁶⁵ A grinning, wide-eyed black man, Jim Brown, with typically exaggerated physical features plays his stylized over-the-shoulder brass instrument and wears an ornate military uniform. Meanwhile, a child marches around the room with a broomstick, mocking militia musters. The lyric lampoons the pretensions of the black band leader who “plays upon de fife [and] de drum,” and at the same time hints at the danger his black masculinity poses to white women:

I den goes to de Mayor, I ax for a commission,
To lead de famus Brass Ban I show him my petition;

⁶⁴ “Crow Quadrilles,” (Baltimore: George Willig, n.d.), Levy Collection, Box 17, Items 15,19. A copy of the same quadrille set from 1837 has a slightly different depiction of a marching band, with trumpet players marching in an exaggerated chair step (Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 16).

⁶⁵ “Jim Brown,” (New York: Endicott, 1836), Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 112.

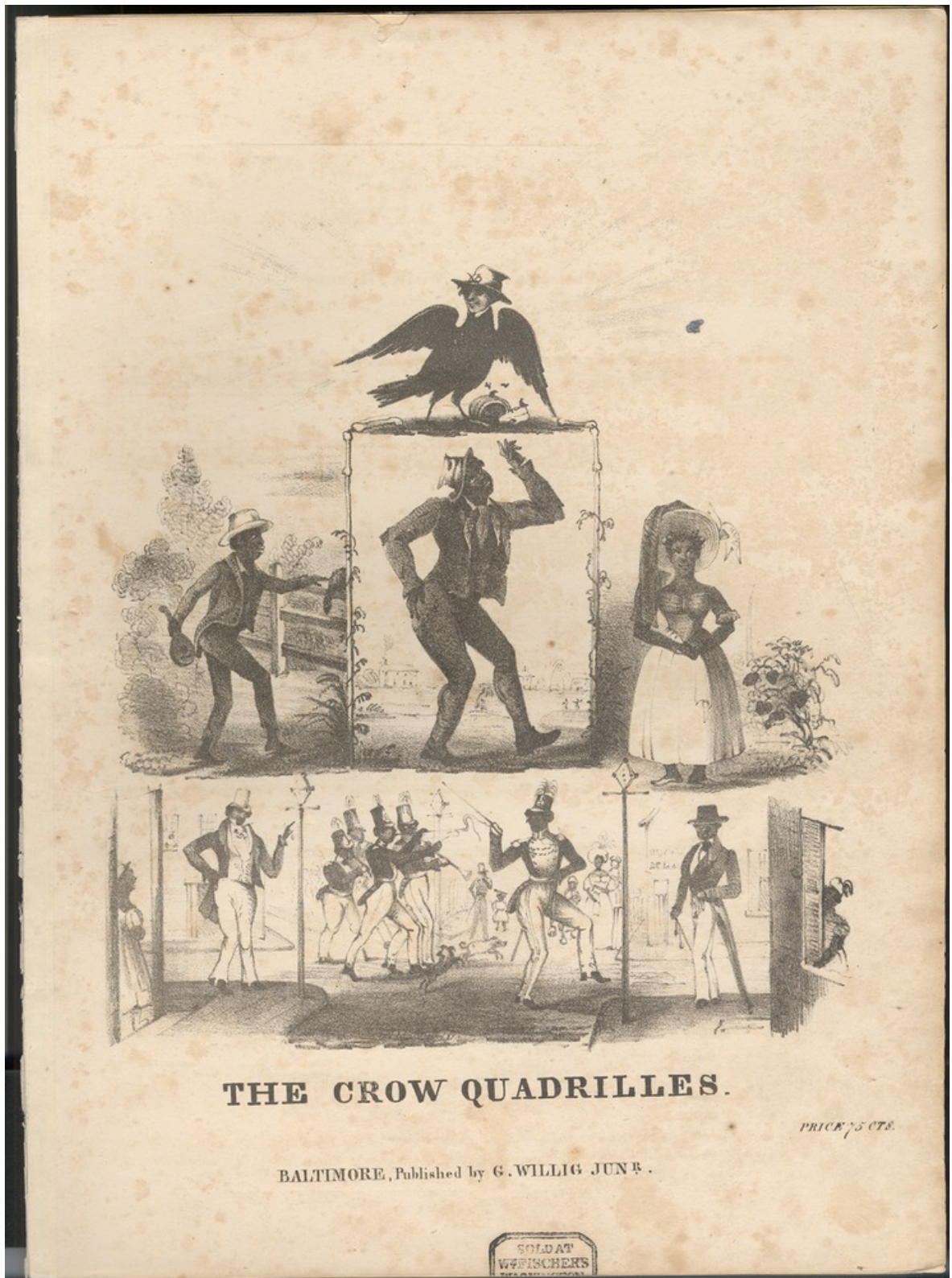


Figure 5.5. "Crow Quadrilles," sheet music cover (Baltimore, ca. 1837). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. Note the marching band at bottom center, with black figures in foppish outfits watching from the sidewalk.

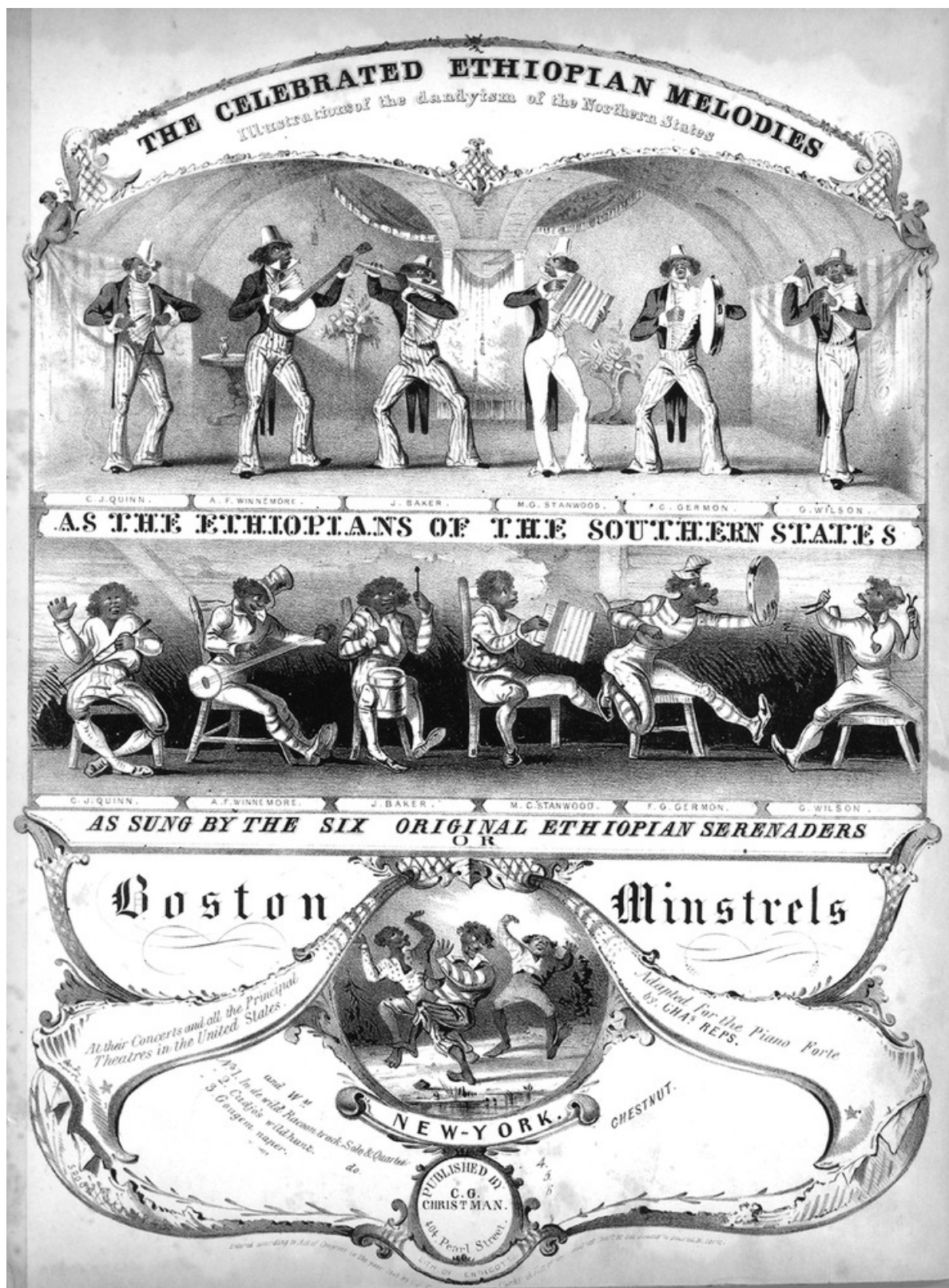


Figure 5.6. “The Celebrated Ethiopian Melodies,” sheet music cover (New York: C.G. Christman, 1843). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. The image contrasts “the dandyism of the northern states” to exaggerated caricatures of southern slaves.

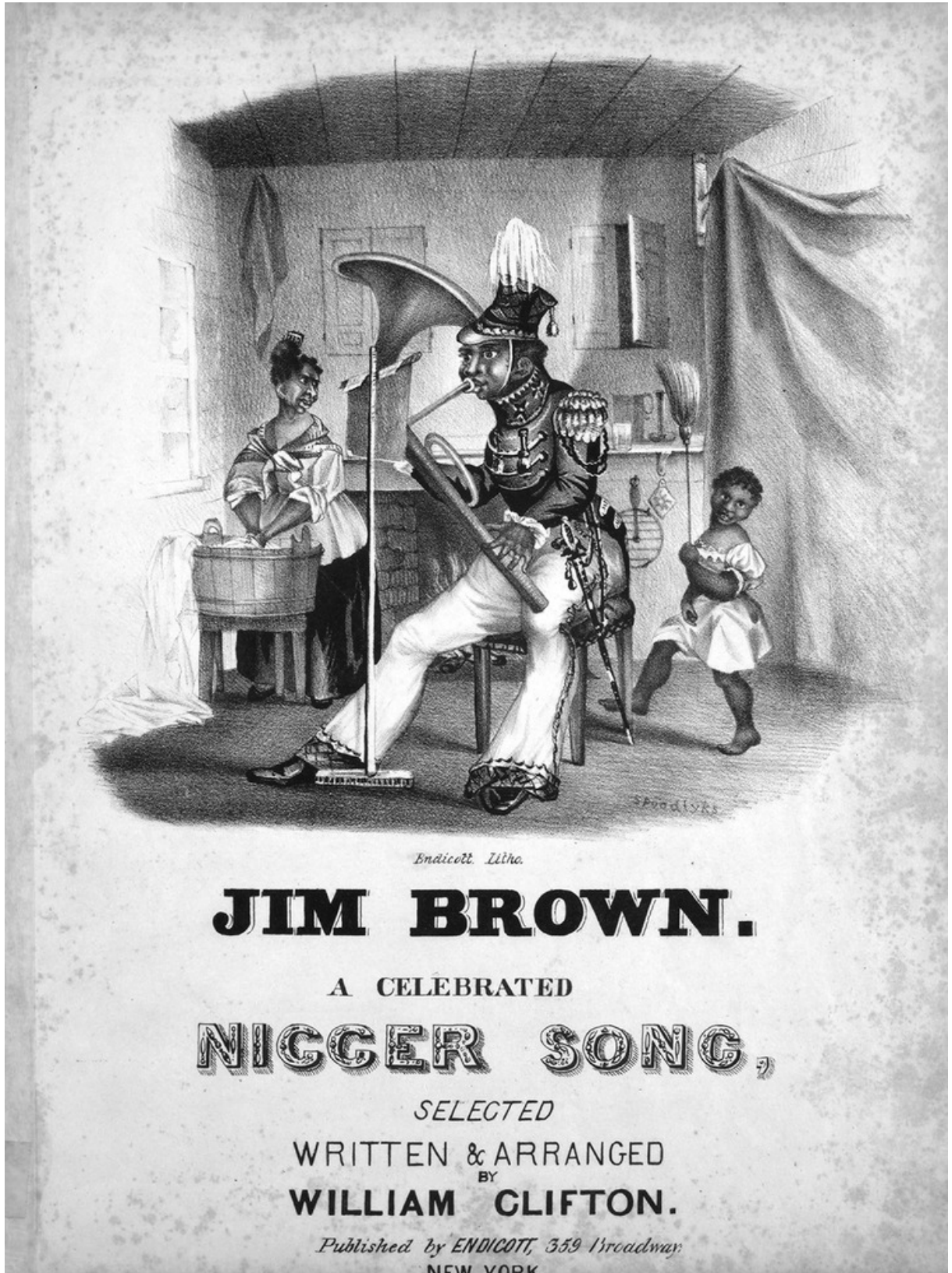


Figure 5.7. "Jim Brown," sheet music cover (New York: Endicott, 1836). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. The image burlesques black militia musicians and militia musters, but occurs in the domestic space of the home.

He say he tink me first rate, he beg me take a seat,
Wide all de Corporation, I dar set down to eat.
I plays upon de Trombone, to see wat dey would say.
One Alderman he bawls out, Jim Brown sound your A. lalle doodle &c.

...
Since Music in dis city, now be all de rage,
I'll teach de skientific an sing upon de stage;
O den I'll hab de encores, from all de lubly sex;
An wen I choose one for my wife, O, de rest ob dem be vex.
I plays on de Piano, I teach dem dance so gay.
O shaw, I lub de charmin gals, any time ob day. lalle doodle &c.

These lyrics allowed some whites to see black musicians like Francis Johnson, who used music to claim a citizen's voice, as a jumped-up, sexualized blackface caricature. Such characterizations were the musical versions of the racist reactions to Johnson's performances, and that generated conflicts between white militiamen and black musicians.⁶⁶ Johnson himself was not averse to using minstrel tunes or appearing alongside minstrel acts. In 1843 or 1844 Johnson arranged the popular minstrel song "Dandy Jim," and in that same period he and his band appeared in Philadelphia in a "grand concert of vocal and instrumental music" (a stock description going back at least to the 1790s) alongside a blackface minstrel performer.⁶⁷

Symbolic figures like the militia band musician "Jim Brown" reflected conflicting attitudes on the minstrel stage and in actual black patriotic usage. For example, Christy's Minstrels, like older minstrel troupes, provided "Jim Brown," who had become a stock figure, with a mock patriotic speech, part of the typical minstrel performance (usually

⁶⁶ Stephanie Dunson, "Black Misrepresentation in Nineteenth-Century Sheet Music Illustration," in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Beyond Blackface: African Americans and the Creation of American Popular Culture, 1890-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 45-65, also Brundage's introduction, "Representations of Blackness in Nineteenth-Century Culture," 43-44. See also Eric Lott, "Blackface Minstrelsy," in Michael Kimmel and Amy Aronson, eds., *Men and Masculinities: A Social Cultural, and Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 84-85; W.T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 47-51.

⁶⁷ Annemarie Bean et al, eds., *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 46-47.

appearing in the second act of the show) that historians call the “stump speech.” The stump speech was a burlesque of the ornate patriotic or political oratory of the day, rife with malapropisms. A small sample of “Jim Brown’s Address to He Soger’s” as performed by Christy’s Minstrels gives the flavor:

FELLER-CITIZENS AND BRUDDER SOGERS!

I hab the super infilicity ob undressing a few words of millumtary tictacs to your magnanimously insignificant and superbly extinguished corpse. Brudder sogers! from dem days of de future *dark* ages, wat has passed down de ascending stream of neber-to-be-forgotten oblibium, to de long-past moments of de resent time, de darkies....⁶⁸

I wish to call particular attention to two elements of this passage. First, it (and the “stump speech” genre as a whole) obviously mocks both the purple prose of white orators and the presumed pretense of the black militiaman. Second, the passage’s malapropisms address the mythic present of militia culture: The “long-past moments of de resent time” and “neber-to-be-forgotten-oblibium” lampoon the mythic present’s veneration of the nation’s past.

As a burlesque, “Jim Brown’s Address” is certainly not in the mode of the patriotic sublime. It is a descendant of the criticism of the statutory militia we saw in Chapter Four, and recalls the nighttime burlesque of the white volunteer militiamen at Camp Baltimore in 1842. Its temporal allusion to “long-past” time satirizes the mythic present of the white volunteer militias’ republican fraternities. In what was probably another version of a stump speech at an 1843 concert in Philadelphia, Dan Emmett’s Virginia Minstrels lampooned a militia muster called Camp Jackson: “the celebrated *COOL WHITE* will appear as the Dandy Nigger of Chestnut Street, and give a description

⁶⁸ Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, 87; W.T. Lhamon, ed., *Jump Jim Crow: Lost Plays, Lyrics, and Street Prose of the First Atlantic Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 428-429n6.

of the appearance, movements, and review of *Camp Jackson*.”⁶⁹ That same year, a slave celebration on a South Carolina plantation became, according to William Cullen Bryant, “a sort of burlesque of our militia trainings, in which the words of command and the evolutions were extremely ludicrous.”⁷⁰ In the slaves’ hands, this was a clever inversion of minstrelsy, in which white performers in blackface mocked African American’s political acuity with “ludicrous” words.

Black musicians and black audiences also practiced patriotic celebration without irony, engaging the patriotic sublime along the way. This included celebration on national holidays. Even if forcibly excluded from July Fourth events staged by whites, black Americans often celebrated independence on the Fifth of July, glossing the day with pointed references to their own far from complete freedom. This was the case in a July Fifth celebration in 1827 in Rochester, New York, in which a “gaudily dressed colored band, *discoursing elegant music*, moved through the principal streets to the Public Square.”⁷¹ From the mid-1830s on, northern blacks, often in the company of white abolitionists, celebrated West Indian Emancipation Day with all the pomp and in all the forms of the Fourth of July.⁷² A correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun* noted a black militia’s celebration of the Fourth itself, in Alexandria, Virginia: a “company of colored men, with a band of music.”⁷³

⁶⁹ *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, November 3, 1843. “Cool White” was Charlie “Cool” White, a member of a different minstrel troupe, the Virginia Serenaders, who was apparently appearing as a guest. See Eric L. Haralson, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Proquest LLC, 2000), 395.

⁷⁰ Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 17.

⁷¹ “Fifth of July,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Sep. 15 1827, italics in original (reprinted from the *Rochester Telegraph*).

⁷² See, for example, the *Emancipator and Republican*, Boston, August 7, 1844.

⁷³ *Baltimore Sun*, July 6, 1850.

Long before this—as early as 1770—black men in Boston marched in military uniform after an earlier white parade:

About nine o'clock, in the evening of the same day, a number of Negro *Grenadiers*, gathered up in the common, and from thence, under commanders (flushed with a military spirit) took it upon them to patrol several streets in the town, with a drum beating, fifes playing and other music, until some of the inhabitants, fearing the ill consequences from such unlawful assemblies, broke their drum, and quickly dispersed them, ordering them to go peaceably home to their masters.⁷⁴

Whether this parade emulated white celebration or mocked it, both free black and enslaved communities early on engaged in the same patriotic rituals as whites, sometimes in parallel celebrations, sometimes in protest and parody of white practice, and sometimes alongside whites. Their participation, whether in unison with whites, like that of Francis Johnson, or in counter practices, took place within the framework of the patriotic sublime.⁷⁵

White reception of black band performance was mixed: it depended in part on the specific audience. Descriptions of reception, emotional, intellectual, or otherwise, from contemporaries were exceedingly rare for popular music performed by blacks. An unusually revealing editorial from Baltimore, published in 1835 just as volunteer militia activity was multiplying quickly in the Monumental City, is thus doubly valuable. This was the same editorial that related clashes between white militiamen and black band members. After praising the fine performance of the band of the Independent Blues, the editorialist calls for strict separation between white and black militias and their bands:

Taking facts as they are, without pretending either to repudiate or defend them, it seems to be certain that the negro bands will not suit the state of feeling in this

⁷⁴ *Massachusetts Spy*, Boston, September 27, 1770. Italics in original. “Masters” is probably an ambivalent word in this context; the marchers could have been slaves, free blacks, or both.

⁷⁵ Leonard I. Sweet, “The Fourth of July and Black Americans in the Nineteenth Century: Northern Leadership Opinion within the Context of Black Experience,” *The Journal of Negro History* 61, no. 3 (July 1976): 256- 275; Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, 87-90.

city...our own white citizens who have formed bands, refuse to parade in line with them; the same objection was made by the band from Boston, and the other day the musicians who accompanied the troops from New-Jersey took the like course. We would suggest, under these circumstances, that gentlemen engaged in forming companies, should have a certain number of young men instructed on such instruments as they may prefer, upon condition, that those who are at the expense of their instruction, shall have the use of their services for a certain time.⁷⁶

In other words, the commentator felt that white militias should hire and train their own white bands, as the Independent Blues had done and the Independent Greys would do several years later. In addition, the article describes tension between the white and black band musicians themselves, not just the audiences or the militiamen. Talented black militia musicians were evidently a common enough sight to constitute a threat to their white counterparts.

Conversely, white antislavery audiences were willing to accept and praise black band when they played at abolitionist events, as at a speech by William Lloyd Garrison in the late 1840s or at a celebration in Boston for the British abolitionist George Thomson in 1851.⁷⁷ In fact, Francis Johnson's band garnered praise in the abolitionist press regardless of the occasion. A tour to Cincinnati elicited the same sort of breathless encomium as was common for white musicians: "their instruments seem a part of themselves, and the spirit they throw into their performances never flags. We advise our city readers who love music to avail themselves of the privilege of hearing, before the band leaves."⁷⁸ The terrain of the patriotic sublime, distilled into its purest form by militia band culture, was contested. For some whites the idea of a black military band was a bridge too far. Yet many audiences responded with fervent patriotic emotion to Francis Johnson and other

⁷⁶ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, October 6, 1835.

⁷⁷ *Liberator* (Boston), Aug 20, 1847, Jun 20, 1851.

⁷⁸ *Cincinnati Philanthropist*, May 3, 1843.

black bands: either because they favored racial equality or because the popularity and skill of the musicians could trump the ideological reaction prompted by skin color.

Blackface minstrelsy raised another question for its white audience: was it “national music”? Elite commentators who spent the most ink on the matter disliked it, lamenting the popularity of blackface minstrel shows at the perceived expense of better music: “Christy’s Minstrels attract overflowing audiences every night, whilst the Germania band and a host of fine talent play and sing to empty benches. We sincerely believe that...the public would rather pay twenty-five cents to hear negro melodies, than listen to true music for nothing.”⁷⁹ Elite commentary like this made an aesthetic judgment about minstrelsy; it also engaged in the condescension and class snobbery fundamental to such “high-brow” judgments about what counted as “true” music. Meanwhile, audiences voted with their pocketbooks: minstrel music, including its many uses of patriotic music, was as “national” as any other.

Minstrel performers and their audiences mostly reinforced the idea that nationality was at least in part racial, but the performance of minstrel music, with its cultural masks, could complicate this proposition. This was spelled out in what purported to be a history of “Nigger Music in England,” in a recollection of the British tour of the Ethiopian Serenaders in 1846, led by minstrel comedian Gilbert Pell:

At first, a few unreasonable grumblers endeavored to stem the popularity of Mr. Pell’s company by declaring that the artists were not real blacks, but only white musicians with blackened faces. This pretended discovery was no discovery at all. Far from wishing to pass themselves off for veritable niggers, Pell and Co, as free-born American citizens, would have bitterly resented the suspicion that they had the least drop of black blood in their veins; so they lost no time in publishing portraits of

⁷⁹ The Germania Society, originating in Berlin, was formed to perform music “under artistic conditions of the highest social and musical order.” “Music,” *The Albion, a Journal of News, Politics and Literature*, New York, September 29, 1839; Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 190-191.

themselves, with the white faces bestowed upon them by nature, in addition to others in which they wore the sable hue of their profession.⁸⁰

The Ethiopian Serenaders asserted their whiteness and their citizenship through these portraits. At the same time, audiences considered the “various negro melodies” they played to be national music.⁸¹ They played other popular music, like selections from Bellini’s much-loved opera *La Sonnambula*, that was well-received, if thought a little out of place because of the minstrel show’s mostly burlesque content: one critic found it “sweetly harmonized, and neatly executed” but perhaps a little “distorted and unreal” as if played by “a vinous violin.”⁸² The “national melodies” or “negro” songs they played were “charmingly arranged and executed with great taste.”⁸³ This critic saw authentic national music in the Serenaders’ black masks: their “dark sublimity, and utter obliviousness of things mundane.”⁸⁴

In America, minstrel music became an important part of the debate about “national music.” This dialogue considered minstrelsy, like Irish or Scottish music, to be popular or vernacular music: either a distasteful craze, like the critic’s interpretation of Christy’s Minstrels’ audience, or a genuine product of black culture. Critics who disdained minstrelsy thought that while it might be “a national characteristic of the United States,” it was still inferior: “it cannot but be feared [as] detrimental to the purity and dignity of the Art.”⁸⁵ A similar critic condemned it with faint praise: “We have seen some slight demonstration of a national music in our ‘Ethiopian Minstrelsy’ and local airs,

⁸⁰ *Albion*, June 15, 1861; Edward Le Roy Rice, *Monarchs of Minstrelsy, from “Daddy” Rice to Date* (New York: Kenny Publishing, 1910), 48.

⁸¹ *The Morning Post* (London), January 20, 1846.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ “Music in the Past Half Century,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, Boston, June 26, 1852, 91.

but these are far removed, in point of aesthetic and scientific character, from operatic composition.”⁸⁶

Abolitionists were perhaps the group most willing to approve of minstrelsy as a national music. Consider a letter from an abolitionist in a Cincinnati journal responding to criticism of minstrelsy in a Pittsburgh publication:

...the editor of the [Cincinnati] *Herald* will state, that *the* concert he commended, he would certainly commend again in similar circumstances; and that *the* music he praised, he still praises – not the *words*, for they are senseless – but the *Music*, which for real, heart-touching melody – is scarcely surpassed. If what are called negro-melodies have been derived from the Southern plantations, we know of no one, except a man thoroughly penetrated with colorphobia, who can find fault when we give *slaves* the credit for them...we know of but two National airs that equal them, and certainly none that surpasses them.⁸⁷

The writer was suggesting that blackface minstrelsy should be credited with popularizing authentic black “folk” music. No matter that it was whites who played and sometimes burlesqued that music, and also judged its authenticity by standards that were mostly a white construction to begin with. Minstrel songs were at once commercial songs and American ones.⁸⁸ In 1837, an earlier authority stressed the remarkable popularity of the genre, both American and black at one remove:

We were wrong when we said that we had no more native songs than those we mentioned. We forgot the music which is at present making the most important figure in the American minstrelsy. We mean those sublime effusions of which “Jim Crow,” “Zip Coon,” and the “Raccoon Hunt,” are the best specimens. These have had an unparalleled popularity. Every boy in the street sings them. The most polished belles in the city have not disdained to carrol [*sic*] the sapient and polished language of Messrs. Crow & Coon at their piano fortes.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ “American Opera,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, Boston (vol. 5 1855), 140.

⁸⁷ “Negro Melodies,” *The Cincinnati Weekly Herald and Philanthropist*, Feb 25, 1846, italics in original; Susan-Mary Grant, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas., 2000), 92.

⁸⁸ Lott, *Love and Theft*, 30-41, chap. 4 *passim*.

⁸⁹ *Portsmouth (NH) American*, July 15, 1837; see also Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 117.

This was a new thought: minstrelsy could be popular with the “boy in the street” and the refined “belle” with her sheet music collection. This writer recognized the routes of print and oral transmission fundamental to minstrelsy’s popular success, and was aware, at least implicitly, of its influence across the different but related spaces of musical performance. If anything in the 1830s and 1840s was a “national music,” it was minstrelsy—at least in much of white America.

Reform Movements and Patriotic Musical Performance

The mid-nineteenth century was the beginning of a seemingly never-ending sequence of crazes in American popular music: for minstrelsy, for band music, for foreign virtuosos like Ole Bull and Jenny Lind. The Hutchinson Family Singers were as popular as any of them, capitalizing on a vogue for singing groups in four-part harmony that began in the 1830s with the Rainer family’s American tour. The Hutchinsons, a rural family from New Hampshire, began performing as a group in 1840, but it was not until 1842 that they caught fire, when the Hutchinson brothers’ young sister Abby joined three of the brothers on stage. First in New England, then in the entire country and finally in Europe, the Hutchinsons became one of the century’s most popular musical acts over the following two decades.

Wildly popular for their non-political songs, the Hutchinsons were also controversial: their apparently passionate antislavery sentiment and performances for the temperance movement engaged them with groups who had dissenting visions of American identity. In any venue, however, their singing could engender passionate

emotion.⁹⁰ The same year as the Hutchinsons first performance, 1840, six men who had “adjourned from a tavern to attend (and ridicule) a temperance meeting [instead] found themselves converted” – they formed the first Washington Temperance Society. In the following several years, Washingtonianism would sweep across the nation, becoming perhaps the most visible public voice of the already popular temperance movement before flaming out, hamstrung by excessive moralism and partisan political activism.⁹¹

Antebellum reform movements were profoundly shaped by the waves of Protestant evangelical revivalism that swept the United States during the early nineteenth century. Revivalism, whatever its theological antecedents and precepts, was in practice a highly emotional form of religious worship, relying in part on vivid word-painting to influence listeners. Francis Asbury, paraphrasing Jonathan Edwards, exhorted preachers to “preach as if you had seen heaven its celestial inhabitants and had hovered over the bottomless pit and beheld the tortures and heard the groans of the damned.” A witness to singing at a camp meeting described it as powerfully emotional, to the extent that the act of singing, and its sound, seemed to cause mass movement: “the *power of God* came down, and pervaded the vast assembly, and it became agitated – swelling and surging like the sea in a storm.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom*, 125-164; Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business*, 111-118. See also Cockrell, ed., *Excelsior*.

⁹¹ Thomas R. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), preface, 3-42, quote from 27; see also Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1963, 1986); Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana, Ill., 1984); George W. Ewing, *The Well-Tempered Lyre: Songs and Verse of the Temperance Movement* (Dallas, 1977).

⁹² Quotes in this paragraph from Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 137, 151; see 135-161 *passim*.

Revivalism lent its passion to reform movements and moved in tandem with the rising tide of nationalist sentiment. Reflecting their national scope, reform movements aimed to improve national character. In fact, one historian has called the temperance movement “the unifying reform, drawing support from countless middle-class Protestants, from skilled artisans, clerks, shopkeepers, laborers, free blacks, and Mormons, as well as from many conservative clergy and southerners who were otherwise hostile to reform.”⁹³ While abolitionists could never be called “unifying,” they joined the temperance movement in appropriating music from many sources, including minstrelsy, and patriotic musical practices associated with brass band culture.

The Hutchinson family built a public image of purity, refinement, and fidelity to family, nation, and cause. Still, their success was inseparable from the burgeoning commerce of music. Hutchinson sheet music flooded the market, and almost all of it engaged with or appropriated other popular forms like minstrelsy, and also patriotic signifiers. Their earliest successes capitalized on that image of purity in songs about home, family, pastoral nature, and motherhood. Yet even a song such as “The Cottage of My Mother,” a solo vehicle for Abby Hutchinson, “as sung with rapturous applause...in all the concerts of the family” hinted at the “notes of liberty...o’er the distant mountains.” The Hutchinsons most enduring favorite, “The Old Granite State,” an up-tempo romp from 1843 in infectious four-part harmony, was an autobiographical song about their family and home state of New Hampshire. It leaves no doubt as to its patriotic feeling or its authors’ antislavery sentiment: “Liberty is our motto...We despise oppression / And we cannot be enslaved.” A later verse declares their temperance allegiance “We are all

⁹³ Steven Mintz, *Moralizers and Modernizers: America’s Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), quote from 72; see also Walters, *American Reformers*, 32-33.

Washingtonians, / Heav'n bless the Washingtonians..."⁹⁴ The family was finely attuned to their market: their invaluable journals, most of the entries written by Asa Hutchinson, are replete with accounts of concert income. Its first entry reads "Money taken about—\$9.00."⁹⁵ Some audience members walked out on their performances, and publishers worried about their baldly antislavery numbers. But their allegiances propelled their popularity among others. The Hutchinsons caught the wave of reform at its crest.

The Hutchinsons borrowed freely from minstrel music in their antislavery and patriotic songs, as did the abolitionist movement as a whole. "Uncle Sam's Farm," a patriotic paean to the nation's industry and "bountiful natural wealth," borrowed the tune to "Walk in de Parlor and Hear de banjo Play." The Hutchinsons best-known antislavery song, "Get Off the Track," set its forceful lyric to Dan Emmett's "Old Dan Tucker." The lyric, reinforced by the pictorially vivid cover explicitly warned politicians and other public figures (Henry Clay, most specifically) to "Get Out of the Way!" of "Freedom's Car, Emancipation" (Figure 5.8).⁹⁶ Compilers of songsters would borrow well-known patriotic tunes along with popular songs for new lyric antislavery lyrics: "Hail to the Cause of Liberty" set to "Hail to the Chief," and "Ye Sons of Freemen" to the tune of the "Marseillaise."⁹⁷

⁹⁴ "The Cottage of My Mother," (New York: Firth & Hall, 1843), Box 18, Item 59, Levy Collection; "The Old Granite State," (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1843), Box 20 Item 102, Levy Collection.

⁹⁵ Cockrell, *Excelsior*, 3 (and n1).

⁹⁶ Timothy E. Sheurer, *Born in the U.S.A.: The Myth of America in Popular Music from Colonial Times to the Present* (Oxford, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 58; "Get Off the Track," (Boston: Published by the Author, 1844), Box 12, Item 156, Levy Collection; Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 25-26.

⁹⁷ Edwin F. Hatfield, comp., *Freedom's Lyre* (New York: S.W. Benedict, 1840); William Wells Brown, *The Anti Slavery Harp* (Boston: B. Marsh, 1848).

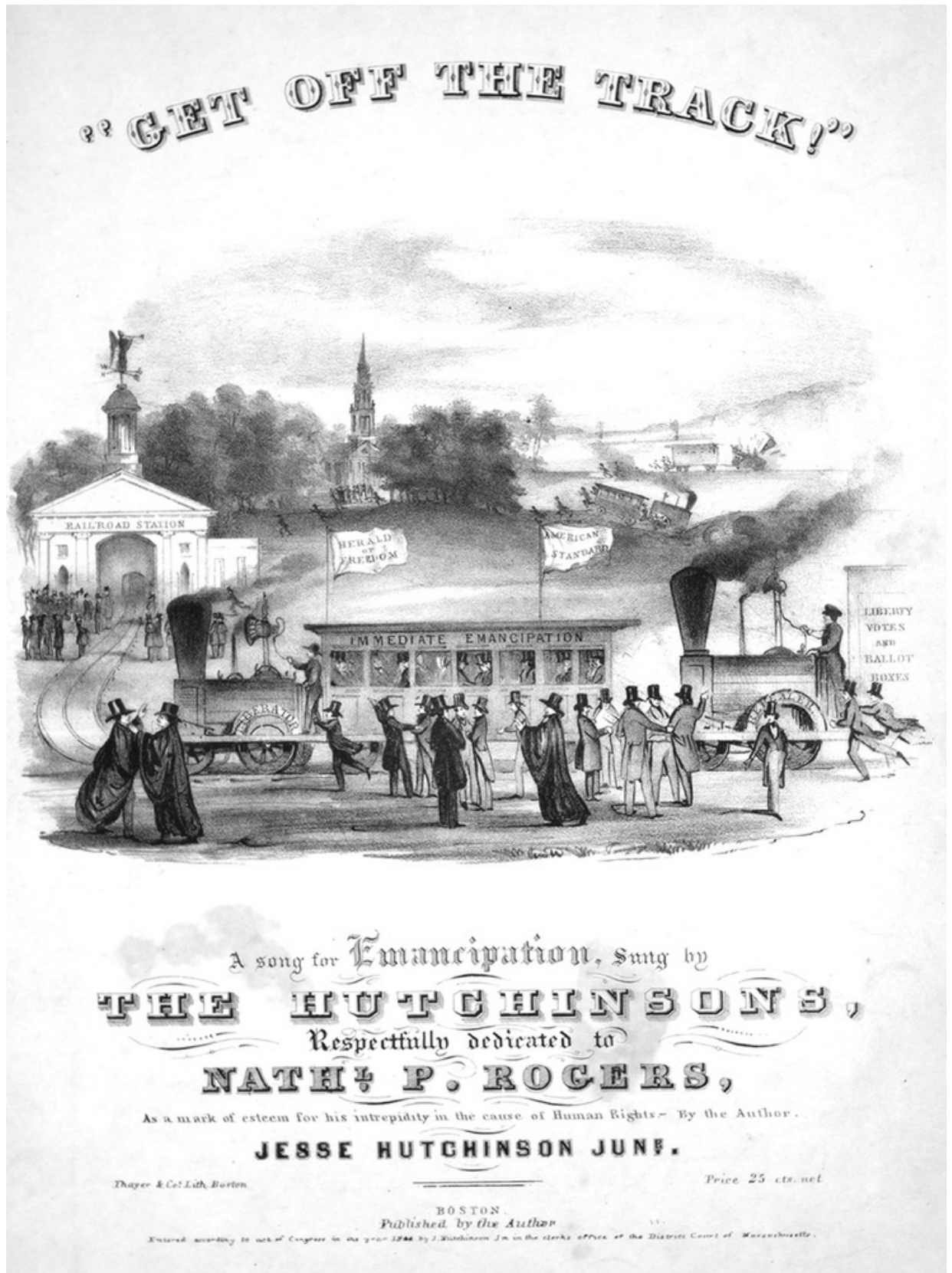


Figure 5.8. "Get Off the Track!," Boston: published by the author, 1844). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

Performers borrowed minstrel tunes and patriotic favorites for two pertinent reasons. First, they were popular everywhere and thus facilitated oral transmission of their reform message. Second, their musical elements, from the driving pulse of “Old Dan Tucker” or the thrilling cadence of the “Marseilleise,” seemed to be associated with rousing, emotional responses from audiences. A remarkable description of a performance by the Hutchinsons at the New England Antislavery Convention in 1844 of “Get Off the Track” demonstrates this and deserves to be quoted at length. Their “outburst,” says the witness,

Is absolutely indescribable in any words that can be penned. It represented the moral rail road in in characters of living light and song, with all its terrible enginery and speed and danger. And when they came to that chorus-cry, that gives name to the song, when they cried to the heedless pro-slavery multitude that were stupidly lingering on the track, and the engine ‘Liberator’ coming hard upon them, under full steam and all speed, the Liberty Bell loud ringing...the way they cried ‘Get off the track,’ in defiance of all time and rule, was magnificent and sublime. They forgot their harmony, and shouted one after another, or all in a confused outcry, like an alarmed multitude of spectators....But I am trying to *describe* it, I should only say it was indescribable. It was life—it was nature—transcending the musical staff....It was the cry of the people....The multitude who heard them will bear me witness, that they transcended the very province of mere music.⁹⁸

This description is wonderful evidence of performance practice: the apparent power of “Get Off the Track!” in live performance owed much to the Hutchinsons’ awareness of “when and how to ignore the notes on the page.”⁹⁹ But more than that, the commentator reacted to the performance exactly as Isaac Munro had reacted to “The Star Spangled Banner” in 1814, constructing a series of vivid mental images—a narrative—that informed his reaction to the music. This included the patriotic image of the “Liberty Bell,” and the railroad tracks and loud, onrushing engine that stood in for military

⁹⁸ Quoted in Cockrell, *Excelsior*, 254. Note the alternate formulation of musical observers’ typical privileging of feeling over description. See also “The Hutchinson Family,” *Christian Observer*, January 5, 1844.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

imagery and reflected the perceived sublimity of new technology. His insistence that “Get Off the Track!” “transcended” music in fact speaks to the ways music was culturally constructed as an intense affect that was difficult to even describe. The language of reception was composed of hidden meanings that were taken as evidence of strong emotion.

The Hutchinsons were themselves witnesses to the affective construction of the patriotic sublime, and partakers of it. Their diary contains a remarkably specific description of the reaction to patriotic music at a concert they attended during a tour to Baltimore in 1844. This was a seemingly tame reformist affair: a concert showcasing the talents of blind pupils from the New York Blind Institution. Asa Hutchinson’s diary entry details the instrumentation of the band and goes on to describe the impact of their patriotic music:

The music by the band was the best part, comprising the following instruments: one fife, castanets, one trumpet, two French horns, two trombones, one bass drum, one pair cymbals. No martial music have I heard so good as theirs since I heard the Boston Band [i.e. probably the Boston Brass Band]. Their ‘Washington March,’ ‘Star Spangled Banner,’ and numerous other favorites were performed with great truth and beauty and were well appreciated by an audience of 500....the band winding up with the still stirring strains of ‘Yankee Doodle’ aroused the whole audience from their stupor and lethargy [caused, in Asa’s view, by a stretch of bad vocal music during the long concert] to fiery animation. Oh, the powers of music!¹⁰⁰

What is to modern sensibilities a tiny band was to Asa Hutchinson powerful enough to sweep the audience to a passionate display. The band’s sonic qualities combined with the familiarity of the music, and the stories it signified, to embody the patriotic sublime. As

¹⁰⁰ Cockrell, *Excelsior*, 210. Such heated language, with creative variations, was familiar to the Hutchinsons from print descriptions of their own audiences’ reactions. For example, a concert in Philadelphia that same year produced a similar furor. As an encore, Asa records, “we returned with Abby and sung ‘The Origin of Yankee Doodle.’ Oh! what excitement this produced. Must repeat. No! Yes! No! Yes! After thunderous applause returned and sung ‘Good Morning.’ Great applause. Variations on piano, good. We closed the concert by singing the ‘Old Granite State.’ A panic-struck audience.” (Ibid, 182).

we have now seen, such displays tied together militia parades, theatrical performances, concerts, even styles and venues further afield, such as minstrelsy, to constitute a web of patriotic sentiment. It is, in fact, difficult to find an antebellum social or reform movement or group that was not drawn to the lodestone of public patriotic display. This included the temperance movement, one segment of which provided some of the most colorful such displays of the period.

The explosive growth of the Washington Temperance Society, their very name a patriotic signifier, was, like the career of the Hutchinsons, thanks partly to the expansion of oral and print transmission networks. In January 1841, Cincinnati's *Western Temperance Journal* reported the Washingtonian excitement in Baltimore for the first time. In a pattern that would be repeated elsewhere, Cincinnatians were waiting for a Washingtonian – an initiate or proselytizer, as it were – to bring the good news west. That had happened by July, and “almost immediately the city’s meetings were filled to overflowing; at least one, and sometimes two or three, were held every night.”¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Washingtonian sheet music and songsters multiplied: the “Washingtonian Pocket Songster” was published as far afield as Utica. The tiny three inch by five inch volume contained a full complement of new temperance songs set to familiar patriotic tunes, starting with “Defence of Fort Temperance,” the first two lines of the lyric recalling its forebear, “Defence of Fort McHenry.” There were temperance songs set to “Hail Columbia,” the newer favorite “America,” and the still-popular “Marseillaise.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 34.

¹⁰² W. Frederick Gould, arr., *Washingtonian Pocket Companion*, Johns Hopkins University Special Collections, Baltimore. Handwritten notes in the back of the volume list what are likely either favorite songs or songs for particular use: the list includes the tunes based on “America” and the “Marseillaise.”

During their brief heyday, these uses of patriotic music set the Washingtonians squarely within the normative orbit of the patriotic sublime.

Washingtonian use of the patriotic sublime was virtually indistinguishable from the broader martial culture of the volunteer militia and brass band, and like those events, Washingtonian celebrations were widely and ecstatically reported in print media. In Salem, Massachusetts in June 1842, a site just two months later for the Maryland Cadets visit, the local Washingtonians celebrated their first anniversary in the company of the Salem Light Infantry and Salem Brass Band. The procession included the separate female Washingtonian society and the so-called “Cold Water Army,” a children’s auxiliary of the larger movement: the term’s application could on occasion shift to the movement as a whole (Figure 5.9).¹⁰³ Washingtonians also celebrated in this style on the Fourth of July and Washington’s Birthday: the July Fourth event in Whittingham, Vermont had the usual band alongside both “flags of freedom” and “banners of temperance.”¹⁰⁴

In the birthplace of Washingtonianism, the third anniversary of the movement was celebrated with a massive, mile-long procession through the streets of Baltimore, a “day of triumph [added] to the history of the age.”¹⁰⁵ Volunteer militia companies escorted the procession and “the fine band of the Independent Blues came next to the carriages, performing during the route, six new tunes, composed and practised for this occasion, and never played in our streets before. Their admirable music elicited frequent exclamations of delight.”¹⁰⁶ The martial pomp of the Washingtonian procession was both an immediate demonstration of affective patriotic sentiment and a reminder of the yearly profusion of

¹⁰³ *Salem (MA) Register*, June 13, 1842.

¹⁰⁴ *Hampshire Gazette*, July 11, 1843; *Connecticut Courant*, February 14, July 23, 1843.

¹⁰⁵ *Baltimore Sun*, April 6, 1843.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

such events, constant reminders of patriotism, “when the brilliant pageant of yesterday shall have faded in the retrospect, or been obscured by still brighter emanations of the same glorious cause.”¹⁰⁷ The Washingtonian movement could deploy the patriotic sublime in celebration of their specific cause because the elastic web of musical venues, print forms, and performance practices made that passionate mode of celebration immediately available and meaningful to them on that April morning in 1843 – just as it was full of meaning for an antislavery audience the next year in Massachusetts.

When Dan Emmett was training on the drums with Juba Clark in 1834 in Cincinnati, his own most famous musical contribution to the patriotic sublime was still almost thirty years in the future: “Dixie,” which was carried to battle by both Union and Southern soldiers during the Civil War. But Emmett was already well aware, as a sensitive musician, of the emotional impact his performances could have. Any of the countless antebellum descriptions of thrillingly emotional patriotic celebration accompanied by music could have been written by Dan Emmett. Both his military training and his career in minstrelsy positioned him to understand that martial music and minstrelsy elicited such responses, and that patriotic songs and minstrel songs were reused over and over for patriotic purposes. Black musicians understood this too, and performed patriotic music for similar purposes. They also knew that the white majority, at least the portion committed to white racial superiority, did not subscribe to a patriotic sublime that unified white and blacks under the same civic banner, so they promulgated the patriotic sublime as their own claim to citizenship, and sometimes for their own national days.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.



COLD WATER ARMY PLEDGE.

We, Cold Water Girls and Boys,^a
Freely renounce the treacherous joys^b
Of Brandy, Whiskey, Rum, and Gin;
The Serpent's lure to death and sin:^c

Wine, Beer, and Cider we detest,^d
And thus we'll make our parents blest:^e
"So here we pledge! perpetual hate"
To all that can Intoxicate."^f

^a Prov. viii. 4. ^b Zech. viii. 5. ^c Isa. lv. 12; v. 11, 12; xxviii. 7. ^d Prov. xx. 1. ^e Prov. xxiii. 32; 1 Peter v. 8. ^f Eph. v. 18; Prov. xxiii. 31; Deut. vii. 26. ^g Prov. x. 1; xxiii. 15; 111 John 4. ^h Jer. xxxv. 6. ⁱ Ps. xvii. 10; Rom. xii. 9; Ps. cxix. 128. ^j Rom. xiv. 21.

CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP.

This Certifies, That *James A. Williams* having
taken the above Pledge, is a Member of the CONNECTICUT COLD
WATER ARMY.

Countersigned,

J. G. Dimmock
Leader of the *Rocky Hill* Division.

Th. S. Williams President Conn.
Temp. Society.

Chas. J. Warren Secretary.

Hitchcock & Stoddard, Printers, New Haven.

73428

Songs of the Cold Water Army.

THE WATER-KING.

We're soldiers of the Water-King,
His laws we will obey;
Virtue and health are his reward—
We want no better pay.

CHORUS.

Then let us sing the Water-King!
Good soldiers, one and all—
Our banners to the breeze we'll ding,
And down with Alcohol.

We boast no sword nor glittering spear;
Ours is a bloodless crown—
A purer, brighter, fairer thing
Than conquerors ever won.

Chorus.—Then let us sing, &c.

Our strength is in the living spring—
And long as waters run,
Or grass grows green, we're pledged to keep
Our Temperance armor on.

Chorus.—Then let us sing, &c.

What though the Fire-King mocks our hosts,
As great Goliath did,
We've temperance Davids in our ranks,
Who'll bring away his head.

Chorus.—Then let us sing, &c.

THE COLD WATER ARMY.

NO. I.

With banner and with badge we come,
An army true and strong,
To fight against the hosts of rum,
And this shall be our song:—

CHORUS.

We love the clear cold water springs,
Supplied by gentle showers;
We feel the strength cold water brings—
"The victory is ours."

"Cold Water Army" is our name,
O may we faithful be;
And so in truth and justice claim
The blessings of the free.

Chorus.—We love the clear, &c.

Though others love their rum and wine,
And drink till they are mad;
To water we will still incline,
To make us strong and glad.

Chorus.—We love the clear, &c.

I pledge to thee this hand of mine,
In faith and friendship strong;
And, fellow soldiers, we will join
The chorus of our song:

Chorus.—We love the clear, &c.

AWAY THE BOWL.

Our youthful hearts with Temperance burn,
Away, away the bowl;
From dramshops all, our steps we turn,
Away, away the bowl;
Farewell to rum and all its harms,
Farewell the winecup's hoarsest charms;
Away the bowl, away the bowl, away,
Away the bowl.

See how that staggering drunkard reels!

Away, away the bowl!

Alas! the misery he reveals,

Away, away the bowl!

His children's grave, his wife's in tears!

How sad his once bright home appears!

Away the bowl, away the bowl, away,

Away the bowl.

Boys. We drink no more, nor buy nor sell,

Away, away the bowl!

Girls. The drunkard's offers we repel,

Away, away the bowl!

All. United in a temperance band,

We're joined in heart, we're joined in hand;

Away the bowl, away the bowl, away,

Away the bowl.

TEMPERANCE BANNER.

Raise your banner high in air,
Write *Cold Water*—write it there;
Let its folds be wide unfurled,
Let it float o'er all the world—
Temperance banner—raise it high,
Let it wave against the sky!

March, Reformers, march ye on,

Soon the battle will be won;

Soon the last poor, staggering soul,

Will have turned—or found his goal;

Press, Reformers, press ye on—

Cease not, till the battle's won!

Hark! I hear you spirits cry,

Come and see us, for we die;

Brandy, Rum, and Gin are dead;

Wine and Beer have, frightened, fled;

And the very winds reply,

Alcohol shall surely die!

Raise your banner, raise it high;

Let it float against the sky;

Let the world adore thee,

Temperance—Truth—and Liberty—

Temperance banner, raise it high;

Let it float against the sky!

YOUTH'S TIC XC.

DISMISSION.

Heavenly Father! give thy blessing,
While we now this meeting end;
On our minds each truth impressing,
That may to thy glory tend.

Save from all intoxication,
From its fountain may we flee,
When assailed by strong temptation,
Put our trust alone in thee.

S. W. B.

THE DRINK WE CHOOSE.

The drink, that's in the drunkard's bowl,
Is not the drink for me;
It kills his body and his soul;
How sad a sight is he!

But there's a drink that God has given,
Distilling in the showers of heaven,
In measures large and free;
Oh, that's the drink for me.

The stream, that many prize so high,
Is not the stream for me;
For he who drinks it still is dry,
Forever dry he'll be.

But there's a stream so cool and clear,
The thirsty traveler lingers near,
Refreshed and glad is he;
Oh, that's the drink for me.

H. REED.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

Children, who have rallied now
Where Immanuel's soldiers bow!
Who will take the temperance vow,
And be a volunteer?

Children! hear the battle cry,
Sounding loud and sounding high,
From the throne of God on high:
Who'll be a volunteer?

See! the foe is gathering fast;
Hark! his clanging trumpet blast!
Who will fight him to the last,
And march a volunteer?

Lo! o'er all the tented field,
God will be our sun and shield;
Alcohol, the foe, shall yield,
If all will volunteer.

H. REED.

NO. III.

Youth! who paths of learning tread,
Youth! whose sires for freedom bled,
Touch not the winecup when 'tis red—
On to glorious victory.

Who will join the Temperance band?

Who will give his heart and hand?

Temperate be and temperate stand?

Youthful patriot! on with me.

Fear ye not the woes and pains,

Fear ye not the servile chains

Run will fasten in your veins!

Fight, then, for your liberty.

Banish Wine, that tempting foe,

Sweet its charms, its poison slow,—

Will ye let your freedom go?

Onward! let us do or die.

S. W. B.

Given the rich history of patriotic music even as early as the 1840s, it is no surprise that reformers like the Hutchinson family or the Washingtonians would have eagerly appropriated music from disparate sources: ranging from minstrel tunes to the well-worn patriotic favorites that were familiar to all. Both kinds of music could be subsumed under the banner of perfectability; the diverse panoply of musical culture, commercial and otherwise, made this possible. Even as these musical genres represented different visions of national identity, they each utilized the full range of patriotic celebratory practices. If the brass band revolution was the apotheosis of the patriotic sublime, music in reform movements was that sublimity put to the test and emerging battered but intact. By the early 1840s, the patriotic sublime had been fully articulated and suffused American culture. It would be tested again just a few years later as Americans confronted the prospect of actual war: a challenge, as they saw it, not faced since the stars and stripes flew over Fort McHenry in 1814.

—Epilogue—

The Sublime War: Patriotic Music in the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848

The Independent Blues and Independent Greys, the volunteer militia companies from Baltimore, participated in a short but important excursion on the Fourth of July, 1848, along with their bands: they made the short journey south to Washington, D.C. to participate in the festivities surrounding the laying of the cornerstone for the Washington Monument, the looming monolith that stands at the center of the National Mall today. Several companies from Baltimore, including the Blues and Greys, as well as the Maryland Cadets, joined the procession from City Hall to the plain that would later become the Mall. Some of their fellows had volunteered for service in the war with Mexico, but there were still plenty of militiamen to make a fine show.

The press remarked on the brass bands of the Blues and Greys: “their performances were received with high applause.” Music, marching, and patriotic symbols were the order of the day for the “war-like” volunteers, who carried many “national flags,” and for other groups like the fire company that held aloft the “Star-Spangled

Banner.” No less impressive was “the army of temperance men...an immense body of the ‘bone and sinew’ of their country.” The junior auxiliaries of the temperance associations “carried their flags and banners, and marched as regularly to the music as did many of the seniors.” The procession was a “mighty multitude...all animated by the same spirit.”¹ News of a peace treaty with Mexico had reached the capital just that afternoon. The daylong festivities, venerating the greatest figure of the nation’s past and the successful consummation of its imperial present, indicated that the patriotic sublime was as strongly felt as ever.

The war with Mexico had stemmed from America’s annexation of Texas in 1845, and more generally from the nation’s eagerness for expansion across the continent. James Polk accelerated the imperialist push for new land (acreage for settlers and their cash crops, especially cotton) that had characterized his mentor Andrew Jackson’s spoliation of native lands and acquisition of Florida in the previous two decades: America’s “Manifest Destiny,” a phrase coined by a percipient newspaperman. Polk, desiring territory further west, especially California, cleverly wielded the Texas annexation as a goad to provoke Mexico into armed conflict; he succeeded in April 1846, using skirmishes between Mexican forces and Zachary Taylor’s small army, comprised mostly of regular army soldiers, near the Mexico-Texas border town of Matamoros as a pretext for war.²

¹ All quotations in this paragraph from the *Baltimore Sun*, July 6, 1848.

² Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 698-752; Charles G. Sellers, *James J. Polk, Continentalist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, 2003); Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), part II. Editor and publisher John L. O’Sullivan coined the phrase “manifest destiny” in the July-August issue of the *Democratic Review*. See Robert W. Johannsen, “The Meaning of Manifest Destiny,” in Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris, eds., *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansion* (College

A surge of bellicose patriotism accompanied the beginning of the war. Herman Melville described the scene in small-town New York as “a state of delirium about the Mexican War. A military order pervades all ranks...’prentice boys are running off to the war by scores. – Nothing is talked of but the ‘Halls of the Montezumas.’”³ To be sure, abolitionists and other political and ideological opponents of the Polk administration who objected to the territorial expansion of slavery dissented from the War.⁴ Still, antiwar sentiment was not the norm: the “national mood,” as one historian has described it, was “adventuresome and aggressive,” as many Americans voiced their support for the war by volunteering and through patriotic display.⁵

An influx of volunteer soldiers, who played a crucial role in the war effort, strengthened Zachary Taylor’s army, which defeated Mexican forces at Monterrey and Cerro Gordo in 1846-47, while U.S. forces besieged and captured Veracruz on the Gulf Coast in early 1847 after an amphibious invasion, one of the first of its kind in history. The war ended with the capture of Mexico City in September 1847. It lasted two years and by some measurements was the most lethal in U.S. history: one American soldier out of every ten engaged died during its course.⁶ More than twice as many volunteers served in Mexico as regular army soldiers: the intense burst of patriotism that greeted the declaration of war was accompanied by a rush of military volunteers. They brought to the

Station, TX: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 7-19.

³ Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 69-70. Cunliffe also quotes a visiting British military officer who commented on the “intense passion for soldiering” of Americans, who were “passionately fond of military display and the profession of arms” (70). See also Bauer, *Mexican War*, 69.

⁴ Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War*; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 6; John H. Schroeder, *Mr. Polk’s War*, especially chaps. 2 and 5; see also Walters, *American Reformers*, 95-96.

⁵ Schroeder, *Mr. Polk’s War*, 33-34.

⁶ Jean Edward Smith, *Grant*, 34-69; K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 752.

field of battle some of the social assumptions of the peacetime volunteer militia companies: they were drawn largely from the same middle class and elite cadres that supplied peacetime volunteer militias, and tended to look down on working class, immigrant regular army enlisted men, resenting the harsh discipline required of the army as a whole.⁷ They also brought with them the musical practices that characterized the peacetime patriotic sublime.

America's belligerence toward Mexico was sustained by the democratization of the patriotic sublime, and war victories occasioned ardent displays of it by soldiers on the battlefield and by civilians on the home front. Americans conceived of their newly powerful country as an object of

love and reverence....We love the *American union* – and we love every thing connected with its history that tends to throw glory and beauty around it....We must have national paintings, national songs, national celebrations, to excite and perpetuate national enthusiasm.⁸

This ode to national unity was occasioned by the hoisting of the “STAR SPANGLED BANNER” in an incident in Mexico City more than a decade before the war, and it nicely defines the patriotic sublime. Patriotism was a feeling, an impassioned appreciation of the “glory and beauty” of the “*American Union*” and everything

⁷ Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army*, 71; 81-83; Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 130. It is worth noting that tension between volunteers and regulars was not universal. The young Ulysses S. Grant, for one, praised the conduct and fighting qualities of the volunteers, and noted the efficiency of Zachary Taylor's amalgamated force. See Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, vol. I (New York, 1894), chaps. 3-5. See also James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: New York University Press, 129-131).

⁸ This ode originated in Charleston, South Carolina, and was reprinted as part of an approving editorial in Cincinnati, and then finally printed again in Hezekiah Niles' Baltimore periodical. *Niles' Weekly Register*, May 11, 1833.

associated with it, including “national song.” It was also a communal sentiment that created a united “We” out of attachment to the nation.⁹

The “star spangled banner” remained a central symbol of the patriotic sublime, and an emblem of victory, martial bravery, and patriotism. In 1846, news of the clash at Matamoros and subsequent declaration of war drew a crowd to Lafayette Square in New Orleans accompanied by the flying of the “star spangled banner,” cannon fire, and an impromptu recruitment of volunteers.¹⁰ In Baltimore, a show at the Columbian Garden featured fireworks meant to represent the sights and sounds of “THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER” and the “BOMBARDMENT OF MATAMOROS.”¹¹ The “Star Spangled Banner” also became the name of a newspaper in Boston and a steamboat in Cincinnati at the start of the conflict.¹²

When the war came, the flag anchored patriotic musical expression and martial sounds to the decades-old narrative of the “star spangled banner” flying over Fort McHenry. Correspondents at the battlefield even echoed closely in their reporting the narrative (and the sentiments) of Francis Scott Key’s original lyric. The “scene” during the bombardment of Veracruz, for example, was “sublime and awe-inspiring” with its “flashes of light” and “booming reverberation of the cannon.” Finally, as at Fort

⁹ Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezuma: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 46-52, 84; Robert Doak, “The Natural Sublime and American Nationalism: 1800-1850,” *Studies in Popular Culture* 25, no. 2 (Oct 2002): 13-14; see also Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 68; Rob Wilson, *American Sublime: The Genealogy of a Poetic Genre* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, WI, 1991), 4-5; Thomas Claviez, “‘Declining’ the American Sublime: Stephen Crane’s ‘The Open Boat,’” *American Studies* 53, no. 2 (2008): 137-138; essays by Roger Thompson and Jennifer J. Baker in *Ralph Waldo Emerson in Context*, Wesley T. Mott, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13, 143.

¹⁰ *Baltimore Sun*, May 12, 1846.

¹¹ *Baltimore Sun*, September 10, 1846.

¹² *Tri-Weekly Statesman*, Columbus, OH, July 9, 1847. The Boston paper was simply titled “The Star Spangled Banner” and was published from 1846-1857. William Taylot & Co.’s book shop in Baltimore stocked it in 1847; see for example *Baltimore Sun*, January 8, 1847.

McHenry, one correspondent also saw at the battle's end "the Star-Spangled Banner float[ing] from the battlements of the far-famed Castle of San Juan de Uloa."¹³

The "star spangled banner" was music as well as symbol: Francis Scott Key's song was front and center throughout the war. It continued to be a reliable component in celebratory activities like toasts, and musicians performed "The Star Spangled Banner" in cities as far afield as Liverpool, Rome, and Veracruz, near the front lines in Mexico, all to glowing reviews in local newspapers.¹⁴ The theater in Veracruz, still scarred by shellfire and filled with occupying soldiers, opened just a week after the city's capitulation to American forces, with a program of Andrew Cherry's "The Soldier's Daughter," an English play with patriotic themes written in 1804 and in regular rotation in American theaters for decades. "The 'Star Spangled Banner,' (of course)," was featured in the play, according to a soldier's report.¹⁵ Closer to home, citizens wrote new lyrics to the music of "The Star Spangled Banner," just as Francis Scott Key had done when he borrowed the tune originally from "Anacreon in Heaven." A celebration of the first settlers of Ohio in Cincinnati featured a new "ode" for the "Buckeye Anniversary," sung to "The Star Spangled Banner."¹⁶ That the ode, with its verses extolling the sacred virtues of both country and region, was approvingly reprinted in Massachusetts speaks to patriotic music's role in eliding regional difference in favor of Union.

¹³ *Trenton (NJ) State Gazette*, April 12, 1847. See also Tom Reilly, *War with Mexico! America's Reporters Cover the Battlefield* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010) on battlefield correspondents during the Mexican War.

¹⁴ *Philadelphia North American*, May 7, 1847; *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 22, 1847; *Baltimore Sun*, March 24, April 23, 1847; *Philadelphia North American*, March 24, 1847.

¹⁵ *Philadelphia North American*, May 4, 1847. On patriotism and gender in "The Soldier's Daughter," see Cindy McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of Women in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 225; Wendy C. Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2013), 110.

¹⁶ *Salem (MA) Register*, April 25, 1844.

The interconnections among symbol, song, and the martial culture of patriotism were nowhere more evident than in the volunteer militia, now more than ever squarely in the public eye. A band performance in New York during a visit from a Boston militia company (the New England Guards, who made a brief appearance alongside the Maryland Cadets during their 1842 Boston tour) vividly demonstrates the immediacy of the combination of music. Military display, and patriotic sentiment:

Leaving their quarters, early in the day, under escort of their entertainers, the ‘City Guard,’ [the New England Guards] proceeded down Broadway, and in passing the Astor House, stopped to pay a salute to Lt. Stetson of the ‘N.Y. Light Guard,’ ... ‘Home, sweet Home’ was played by the N.Y. Band, and ‘Auld Lang Syne’ by the Boston Brass Band. At this moment, the flag was run up from the roof of the house, and floated merrily in the breeze. At this sudden display, the two bands united and played ‘The Star Spangled Banner,’ all together. The effect was stirring to the heart of every listener. The national anthem being over, the military salutes were interchanged, and the battalion proceeded on its way.¹⁷

The martial sounds of the “military salutes” followed what was certainly an impromptu performance of “The Star Spangled Banner.” the two bands managed the difficult business of the sudden command performance when someone at the Astor Place Hotel, where Lieutenant Stetson was apparently staying, raised the flag. The symbol had become inextricably entangled with the song and with military display. Finally, the reporter’s effusions about the heart-stirring music placed the reader in a familiar position, witness to the colorful aural and visual display of the proud volunteers on parade.

The militarization of the patriotic sublime was strongly reinforced by reports from the battlefield which also emphasized the importance of music to the soldiers. One recruit in the Baltimore Battalion, comprised of members of various volunteer militias from the city, emphasized the daily presence of music during the Mexican campaign: “the

¹⁷ *Boston Courier*, August 5, 1844.

different beats and calls of each regiment are distinctly heard in our camp, and military music – drums, fifes, and bands – is sounding at all hours of the day.”¹⁸ An Ohio volunteer related how the band of a regiment of dragoons “cheered us with the best of martial music.”¹⁹ Press correspondents traveling with the troops were eager to report on the daily use of music, whether the field music of fife and drum or the sound of full bands. Journalist C.M. Haile wrote from camp that “nothing is more stirring than the fife and drum well played. Half a dozen drums and as many fifes are now ‘discoursing’ merry music,” while, of the full bands, “the music is soul-stirring enough to open the eyes of the veriest sluggard in camp.”²⁰ At Veracruz, the “fightin’ tune” of “Yankee Doodle” was played as the Americans made their amphibious assault: “everyone’s face paled with excitement” and “pure unadulterated patriotism flowed at every pulse,” according to one account.²¹

Reports from Mexico also emphasized the connection between music and the sounds of war, recalling Francis Scott Key’s bombs bursting in the air. In his war diary, the young George B. McClellan spoke of the “fine music” of a naval battery.²² Correspondent William Tobey made the connection between gunfire and music quite explicit: “but those shells...make a most enchanting sanguinary sound. He that hears their music feels that there is death in it, but still will like it; and believe it or not, one often,

¹⁸ John R. Kenly, *Memoirs of a Maryland Volunteer: War with Mexico, In the Years 1846-7-8* (Philadelphia, 1873), 234.

¹⁹ Joseph E. Chance, ed., *Mexico Under Fire: Being the Diary of Samuel Ryan Curtis, 3rd Ohio Volunteer Regiment, During the American Military Occupation of Northern Mexico, 1846-1847* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1994), 104.

²⁰ Tom Reilly, *War With Mexico!: America’s Reporters Cover the Battlefield*, ed. Manley Witten (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 49, 101-102. Haile was the creator of “Pardon Jones,” a Southwestern character who was a regional caricature similar to the “Arkansaw Traveler.” See Edward J. Piacentino, ed., *C.M. Haile’s “Pardon Jones” Letters*.

²¹ Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 54.

²² George B. McClellan, William Starr Myers, ed., *The Mexican War Diary of George B. McClellan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1917), 69.

when they have ceased for a time, wishes they would begin again their song of destruction.”²³ Such descriptions underscored bravery under fire and a sense of war’s sublimity, a sensibility that had long been reinforced in the culture of the volunteer militia bands and their auditors, like Tobey.²⁴

Tobey also seemed to revel in the patriotic sublime’s glorification of battle, blood, and death. George McCall, an officer in Zachary Taylor’s force, described the battle at Resaca de la Palma in front of Matamoros in 1846 as “sublime and beautiful,” soon after he saw the jaw of one soldier shot off by a cannon shell, and a fellow officer’s “brains dashed” and splattered by the force of the blast.²⁵ The sounds of battle were “peculiarly grand and sublime” to eyewitnesses, and death in battle only added to the terrible sublimity of war. Another soldier wrote that the ideal death was “at the red-mouthed cannon, with feet to the foe.”²⁶ All of these eyewitness descriptions characterized battle as exciting, echoing Francis Scott Key’s narrative of amped up anxiety as he watched the bombardment of Fort McHenry.

Courage in the face of these experiences was proof of soldiers’ republican virility and virtue. The patriotic sublime was by now tightly tied to the hyper-masculine ideals of the citizen-warrior.²⁷ Volunteer militiamen bought wholesale into the rhetoric of masculinity characteristic of Jacksonian Democracy. Their manly valor fitted them for all

²³ Reilly, *War With Mexico!*, 110.

²⁴ Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, chap 4.

²⁵ George A. McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers: Written During a Period of Thirty Years’ Service in the Army of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1868), 453.

²⁶ Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 85, 102; see also Christopher D. Dishman, *A Perfect Gibraltar: The Battle for Monterrey, Mexico, 1846* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 163; Frederick Zeh, William J. Orr, Robert Ryal Miller, eds., Orr, trans., *An Immigrant Soldier in the Mexican War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 16.

²⁷ Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, 67-69; McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny*, 129-130.

the privileges of citizenship in the powerful new United States, and they carried in Mexico a sense of martial manliness yoked to the crusading cause of Manifest Destiny.²⁸

Patriotic celebration, accompanied by patriotic music, was omnipresent at the battlefield. The following is a soldier's description of the Mexican surrender at Monterrey:

Gen. Worth, with his division, triumphantly marched into the beautiful city of the True Cross, with the bands playing "Yankee Doodle," "Star Spangled Banner," "Hail Columbia." The Mexican flags were hauled down and the Stars and Stripes put in their place, waving in the breeze and saluted by our artillery, which caused great shouts and cheering among all the soldiers and sailors.²⁹

This victory ritual and its eyewitness account, which detailed the music, the martial sound of cannon fire, and the visual impact of the flag, was a close parallel of ritual celebrations (and the reporting of them) back home—civic celebrations which were themselves reenactments of the look and sound of battle. The battlefield rituals and their descriptions were replicated many times during the war.

In fact, the elaborate pageantry of peacetime festivities seemed to have created expectations about what should happen during war. Some observers were even a little disappointed by the lack of pomp. One witness of a victory celebration complained that "there was not ceremony enough in raising" the flag, even though the "band of the 8th

²⁸ Toby L. Ditz, "Afterword: Contending Masculinities in Early America," in Thomas A. Foster, ed., *New Men: Manliness in Early America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 256-258; Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict During the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 169-170; Belinda Linn Rincon, Heidi Hoechst, "Refusable Pasts: Speculative Democracy, Spectator Citizens, and the Dislocation of Freedom in the United States," PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008, 15, 18.

²⁹ J. Jacob Oswandel, *Notes of the Mexican War, 1846-47-48* (Philadelphia, 1885), 99. Oswandel also describes the string of celebrations as his unit made its way along the Ohio River after war's end, emphasizing the "roar of artillery" at Cincinnati, where he asked rhetorically, "who wouldn't be a soldier of the Mexican War?" See 592-596. John R. Kenly, a captain in the Baltimore Battalion, noted in his memoirs a similar scene when American troops marched into Victoria the previous year, including the raising of a flag "selected from our battalion [which] was hoisted amid the music of all the instruments in our command, playing 'Hail Columbia' and the 'Star Spangled Banner.'" See Kenly, *Memoirs of a Maryland Volunteer*, 192.

infantry” played the ‘Star-Spangled Banner,’ and the field music ‘Yankee Doodle.’” He grumbled that “troops should have been paraded under arms” and that “a national salute should have proclaimed... ‘Liberty and Union, now and forever’ now that the troops had ‘advanced to the banks of the Rio Grande.’”³⁰

Entrepreneurs at home were quick to seek profit from the exploits of war. This was especially true of the sheet music business, which by the mid-1840s was in the midst of explosive growth to fulfill the rapidly increasing demand for inexpensive printed popular music.³¹ Publishers speedily leveraged the reports of American exploits during the war into lavishly illustrated sheet music numbers, often printed in multiple locations thanks to increasingly integrated communication networks and the growth of multi-city publishing houses. The publisher W.C. Peters, for example, wandered from Pittsburgh to Louisville and then to Cincinnati, and finally to Baltimore, opening music stores, piano parlors, and publishing branches in all of these cities. (By 1851, he was based permanently in Cincinnati, which by that time had become the central hub of music publishing in the West.)³² In 1847, his Cincinnati branch published “Santa Anna’s Retreat from Cerro Gordo,” a piece for piano “taken from a celebrated Scotch melody,” and a quickstep that purported to represent in music the Mexican general’s ignominious repulse from the field, including the moments where he loses his “wooden leg” and “Mexican Hat” as he retreated (Figure 6.1). In addition to making Santa Anna appear ridiculous, the

³⁰ William Seaton Henry, *Campaign Sketches of the War with Mexico* (New York: Harper, 1847), 66.

³¹ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 232; Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business*, 46-48, 346-363.

³² Peters printed a version of the “Arkansaw Traveler” and a large volume of church music (advertising himself as a leading music publisher for Catholics), and also instrumental music from European composers. See Osborne, *Music in Ohio*, 511-513; Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business*, 129-131; C. Moore, “Masonic Review,” Cincinnati, vol. XI (1854), 128; *The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity’s Directory*, Baltimore, 1854, 335-337.

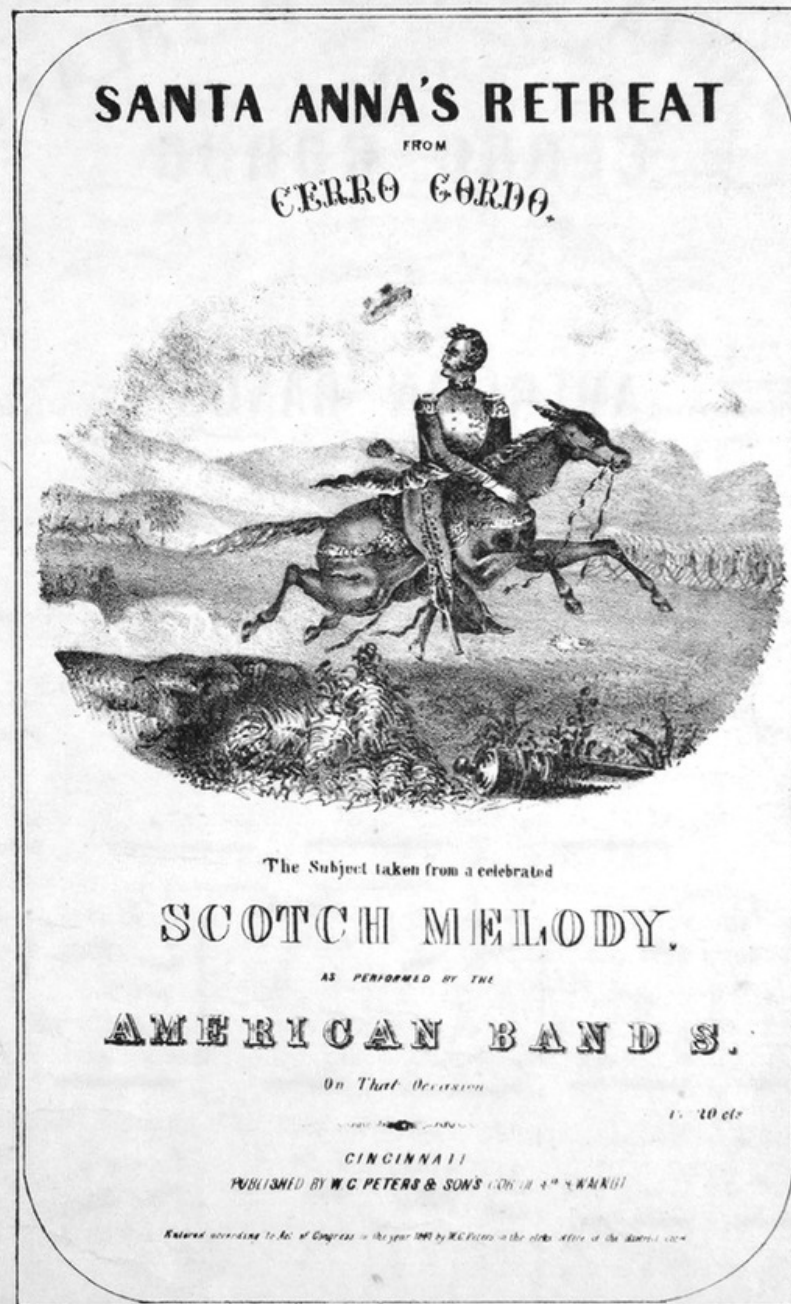


Figure 6.1. "Santa Anna's Retreat from Cerro Gordo" (Cincinnati: W.C. Peters, 1847). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

piece claimed to be a reincarnation of the music actually played on the battlefield: it was “as performed by the American bands on that occasion.”³³

This march was only one of many such patriotic pieces featuring recent military victories published in Cincinnati and other music centers that flooded the market during the war. Examples included “General Scott’s Artillery March” published in Cincinnati and “as performed by the Brass Bands,” and much more martial music celebrating war heroes like Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Many pieces featured elaborate depictions of American victories, representing an eyewitness alongside American troops at the heart of the action (Figure 6.2).³⁴ Increasingly cheap and plentiful sheet music combined visual images and familiar musical styles to reinforce the patriotic sublime for audiences at home.

Theatrical performance also reinforced an imagined connection between patriotic audiences and soldiery. Theater managers during the Mexican War took advantage of American victories to produce spectacle plays replete with music and lavish visuals. Like theatrical reproductions of the bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore theaters during and after the War of 1812, theaters laced together music and visual representations of battle scenes. A New York play called “The Siege of Monterey, or the Triumphs of Rough and Ready,” dramatized battles in Mexico by linking vivid scenes to music. A “Chorus of Soldiers” accompanied “Fort Brown by moonlight” with “our flag float[ing] Proudly.” In the next scene, Zachary Taylor (whose nickname was “Old Rough and

³³ “Santa Anna’s retreat from Cerro Gordo” (Cincinnati, Louisville: W.C. Peters, 1847), Box 86, Items 90-91, Levy Collection. The song received at least two printings from Peters: one in Cincinnati and Louisville, the other in those two cities and Baltimore as well. In 1848, the firm published a similar piece, “Santa Anna’s Retreat from Buena Vista. Quickstep,” composed by Stephen Foster, whose initial publisher for some of his most famous pieces was Peters (Levy Collection, JHU, Box 68, Item 110).

³⁴ “Monterey, A National Song,” (New York: Firth & Hall, 1847), Box 4, Item 80, Levy Collection.



Figure 6.2. Sheet Music cover, “Monterey, A National Song,” (New York: Firth & Hall, 1847). Lester H. Levy Sheet Music Collection, Johns Hopkins University.

Ready”) dreams about “The Capture of Monterey” and the “Bombardment of Vera Cruz.” Finally, the “Revielle” (a bugle call) wakes another “Gallant Soldier” as “the mist disperses and discover[s] Fort Brown at break of day.”³⁵

Other theaters in New York and Cincinnati produced plays based on the siege of Monterey during the war, and a reviewer of one such production in New York explicitly connected theater, patriotism, and war:

From the great number of persons that these patriotic spectacles attract to the theatre, it seems that there is quite a taste among the community for all the dangers incident to war and its scenes, and that this taste is not merely a passing one, or one that is satisfied with the mere mimic representation of war, the great number of New Yorkers who have really and bodily gone to the wars...is a most conclusive proof. It has been said, ‘as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined,’ and we really do believe that the amusements of a people have a great deal to do with the formation of their character.³⁶

According to this critic, patriotic theater did much more than entertain: it forged a national identity in its audiences based on its craving for war and its “dangers.” “Patriotic spectacles” during wartime accustomed audiences to a militarized version of the patriotic sublime, and even prompted a “great number” to join up for service. Patriotic spectacle at home incited the taste for battle.

The deaths of war heroes also reinforced this militarized version of the patriotic sublime. The February 1847 funeral procession in Baltimore for William H. Watson and Randolph Ridgley, casualties from among the city’s militia volunteers, demonstrates the vividness, immediacy, and scope of the patriotic sublime. “Chivalrous and brave....no renown can be greater than theirs,” the Baltimore *Sun* intoned sententiously; and their funeral procession was an “occasion marked by all the pomp and circumstance of

³⁵ *New York Herald*, October 8, 1847.

³⁶ *New York Herald*, February 3, 1848.

military display.”³⁷ As befitted a war that showcased the exploits of the volunteers, their deaths were quickly reported at home, as were the minute details of the voyage of their remains back to Baltimore.³⁸ The death of artillery captain Samuel Ringgold the previous year had occasioned mourning not just in Baltimore but throughout the nation, including sheet music to commemorate his death. A decade later, a Boston firm was still publishing a vocal quartet called the “Death of Ringgold.”³⁹

Watson, Ridgley, and Ringgold all embodied the masculine militia culture that surrounded the mid-century martial valence of patriotism. Watson had not only been commander of the Independent Blues, but also a member of the Columbian Fire Company and the International Order of Odd Fellows, and was at one point elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, while Ridgley and Ringgold, of a younger generation, were scions of respected families.⁴⁰ All had joined Baltimore’s wartime volunteer regiment, drawn from the city’s volunteer companies that served in Mexico. On the home front, Baltimore’s volunteer militia companies continued all of the activities that had enmeshed martial symbols and practices within the city’s civilian society. Concerts, parades, drills, July Fourth celebrations, and excursions, including, for example, a trip by the Independent Blues’ Band to perform at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, kept the patriotic sublime in public view at home. Winter was the season for military balls, and funeral observances for Watson, Ridgley, and Ringgold took place amidst a

³⁷ *Baltimore Sun*, February 9, 1847.

³⁸ *Baltimore Sun*, December 18, 1846.

³⁹ See for example *Baltimore Sun*, December 22, 1846; *Philadelphia North American*, June 23, 1846; *Bennington (VT) Gazette*, June 23, 1846; and many more. Even the abolitionist press, vehemently opposed to the war and to James Polk’s foreign policy in general, could perpetuate the rapturous narrative of Ringgold’s death even as it criticized that narrative from a theological perspective. See “The Last Words of War’s Dying Saints,” *Emancipator*, Boston, June 24, 1846.

⁴⁰ *Baltimore Sun*, June 2, 1846; Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 113-114, 194; Kenly, *Memoirs of a Maryland Volunteer*, 162-163.

stream of volunteer company fetes, including a massive ball at the Holliday Street Theatre for the entire 53rd Regiment (including the Maryland Cadets and Independent Greys) the week before the funeral procession.⁴¹

The scene at the funeral procession for Watson and Ridgley on February 8, 1847 was the apotheosis of the patriotic sublime. It was a public display made possible by a broadly received and flexible culture of music built up over several decades, and by an intensification of the martial valence of patriotic sentiment that has continued to resonate as one mode of patriotism up to the present day. Its tone was set in a eulogy for the former commander of the Independent Blues:

Watson went forth from amongst us, one of the people; he was familiar to thousands, his ready smile, the prompt nod of recognition, the hearty grasp of the hand, were known to the multitude, the masses of his townsmen. They all knew Watson, though perhaps none of us would have known so well the gallant spirit that dwelt within, but for the mingled tale of death and victory that came to us from Monterey. Who does not remember that in the midst of the general joy which burst forth, upon the tidings of that gallant fight and glorious triumph.⁴²

Watson himself, presented as a unifying figure, a man of the people, was a symbol for the unity assumed to follow from the imagination of the “gallant” and “glorious” battle for which he sacrificed his life. This was an occasion for patriotic celebration, rather than gloom, much less regret about war. The eulogy presupposed assent to this martial sublime.

Band music, as usual, was central the pageantry of the procession. The order of procession was limned with all the colorful and “splendid regalia” of the many militia companies, fire companies, and other fraternal societies that took part. Spaced out among

⁴¹ For 53rd Regiment ball, see *Baltimore Sun*, January 28, February 1, 1847; see also *Baltimore Sun*, August 16, February 22, September 1, 4, 1845, January 26, April 14, 1846, for examples of other social events.

⁴² *Baltimore Sun*, February 9, 1847.

the marchers were no less than six military bands, including the band of the Independent Greys, and the Independent Blues and their band as chief mourners. The latter band was led at this time by Albert Holland.⁴³ Holland and Watson (not to mention James Deems, Sol Smith, Lowell Mason, Daniel Decatur Emmett, and the rest of the country's antebellum musical community) would have endorsed the presence of the many proud bands interspersed in the marching column, as having elevating effects on its members and the public.

The patriotic sublime originating with Francis Scott Key connected music and attachment to the nation to the imagery and sounds of war. The patriotic sublime reached its zenith in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, and Key likely would have been repelled by the death-loving and triumphalist tenor of the most militarist versions of it. He died in 1843, so did not live to experience the full-throated roar of war supporters in 1846. The United States had become an aggressive continental power, and the militarized patriotic sublime was an expression of this expansionist nationalism. It celebrated virile, martial manhood, revered bloody conflict, and even death in battle as noble.

Patriotic music was (and is) available to different constituencies, including anti-war dissenters. Abolitionists like the Hutchinson family, or anti-war Whigs, could be as moved by "Yankee Doodle" as the soldiers splashing ashore at Veracruz in 1846. Many of the musicians, writers, and audiences who used music to generate patriotic excitement in peacetime America, and labeled the results sublime, were perhaps not fully aware of what the sublime could mean when the United States flexed its imperial muscle in the

⁴³ *Baltimore Sun*, February 8-9, 1847. If the Washingtonian Temperance Society had been a part of this procession, as they were of many, Holland could also have marched with them: he was a founding member. On Holland, see Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, 369.

crucible of war. Sacral patriotism and elevated or refined national feeling in music easily became a celebration of the bloody virtues of battle, conquest, and even death.

The Mexican-American War cemented the patriotic sublime firmly into place as the dominant emotional valence of American nationalism and its music. By the outbreak of war, the well-integrated print and performance networks that had grown up in the preceding decades rapidly disseminated encomiums of martial virtue, battle narratives, and the music that went with them. The flash and dash of martial parades and patriotic spectacles in American streets and theatres and their reenactments of the mythic present reinforced the association of national feeling with war. It would prove difficult in the future to dislodge the patriotic sublime from its central place in the cultural practices of nationalism.

—Conclusion—

By 1848, Americans had created a new kind of patriotic sentiment I call the patriotic sublime. It was imagined in musical form by Francis Scott Key when he wrote “The Star Spangled Banner” during the bombardment of Fort McHenry, cemented in place by the elaboration of musical culture during the intervening decades, and brought to full flower during the war with Mexico. I have argued that for many, mostly white, Americans, the patriotic sublime was a commonplace, even normative, way to express patriotism, and that it came to be associated with and intensified by war. When, for example, people performed patriotic songs at concerts, or heard them alongside spectacle plays in theaters, or played them while on the march with volunteer militias companies, they were playing music that ardently expressed national unity, although different constituencies demarcated unity in a variety of ways. In wartime, these expressions were filtered through the evocative sounds and images of battle, making the link between patriotic expression and war strong and lasting.

The importance of music during the Civil War confirmed the resiliency of the patriotic sublime that had been built up during the preceding decades. In 1860, Americans greeted the declaration of war with a flood of patriotic emotion stimulated by music, like the “general outburst of enthusiasm” in Middletown, Connecticut:

Little knots of men had gathered here and there in the forenoon but as the day advanced the crowd grew thicker, and several hundreds were in Main street when the flag was raised from the Custom House. Cheers were given, and the “Star Spangled Banner,” and other national airs were played by the...band.¹

Similar scenes were repeated in cities and towns across the country. “The uprising is universal,” one sermon thundered: “the streets echo to the soldier’s tread, and the strains of martial music.”² These strains included “The Star Spangled Banner,” “Hail, Columbia,” “Yankee Doodle,” and later “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” and even the minstrel song “Dixie,” composed by Dan Emmett. To these patriotic favorites, both sides added numerous marches, quicksteps, and patriotic pieces in other genres, played by brass bands. The patriotic sublime would survive the great conflict that followed, and has remained ever since a central expression of national identity and unity.

“The Star Spangled Banner” and its dissemination inaugurated for many Americans the mode of the patriotic sublime as the emotional dimension of patriotic practice, taken up through music. During the political brawls of the 1790s, Federalists and Jeffersonians used different patriotic songs to express their partisan positions. At the same time, elite figures like Joseph Hopkinson, author of “Hail, Columbia,” were interested in promoting a national identity based on republican virtues amongst a broad

¹ *The Constitution* (Middletown, CT), April 24, 1861.

² A.L. Stone, “Sermon XVI,” *The National Preacher and Village Pulpit* 3 6 (June 1861), 159.

polity, who would, Hopkinson and others thought, be able to identify true patriotism through their refined sensibility, including the emotions that virtuous republican citizens were supposed to feel in the face of sublime images and sounds. Francis Scott Key was part of this project of democratization. With “The Star Spangled Banner,” he added to it vivid imagery and stirring rhythms that placed the performer as an eyewitness to the scene of battle, exemplifying the patriotic sublime in music. It was foreshadowed by earlier examples like “Washington’s March” and “Chester,” but “The Star Spangled Banner” was distinguished by the rapid and widespread dissemination of its battle narrative in print. The steady build up of American musical culture through the first half of the nineteenth century made the employment of the patriotic sublime in lyric and tune both possible and powerful.

To tastemakers like J.S. Dwight or Lowell Mason, social uplift of the mass of citizens was part of a movement toward a refined, civilized society. “National music”, it was thought, marked social progress and national character. The discourse of national music continued the project of refinement begun by people like Joseph Hopkinson and Francis Scott Key. Ironically, the democratization of sensibility and the sublime meant that many Americans played and wrote patriotic music without worrying overmuch about the dictates of elites. For example, Westerners constructed what they considered an exemplar of national character through music: a character that was hard-working, self-reliant, often bumptious, and not overly influenced by the effete civilities of Europe or the East Coast. By incorporating into concerts music of many kinds, including the national music of other cultures like Ireland and Scotland music, musicians and audiences

used the adaptability of musical culture to produce their own versions of the patriotic sublime.

The rise of the patriotic sublime did not occur in a void. It relied on performance venues and the connections forged among them by performers: the networks through which live and printed music traveled. This lattice included civic spaces like streets, public parks, monument sites, and temporary purpose-built places like the Baltimore encampment of 1842. It also included commercial space: theaters, which ranged from permanent edifices like Baltimore's Holliday Street Theatre, to rudely built wooden structures like the Shellbark Theatre in Cincinnati, and "theatres" that were simply, for example, repurposed taverns or temporary buildings thrown up in a week, like the circuses built by John Durang and company. People played patriotic songs in singing schools and churches, and purchased music and musical instruments in specialty stores and even bookshops to play patriotic music at home. Historians have tended to analyze these places separately as venues for distinct genres of music and types of performance. I have argued instead that by observing the ways these distinct nodes on the musical lattice are connected, we better understand the spread and elaboration of patriotic music and nationalist sentiment.

While genteel white Americans wanted to encourage their particular vision of nationalist sentiment and refined musical taste, the patriotic sublime was propagated by a diverse set of actors between the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War. Traveling performers and theatre impresarios like Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow did much to create this broadly shared culture, as did performers who put down local roots like Joseph Tosso or James Deems. Musical tastemakers like J.S. Dwight, newspaper editors, purchasers of

sheet music, amateur musicians who joined militia bands like the Baltimore Independent Greys, blackface minstrels like Dan Emmett, reformers like the Hutchinson family, and black musicians like Francis Johnson all strengthened the interconnections between musical places. They played and listened to patriotic music in virtually every venue. The patriotic sublime tied together civic space and public celebration with the commercial marketplace, where the patriotic sublime appealed to theater-goers and purchasers of sheet music.

The musical materials used by performers and audiences to assert attachment to nation were part of a common culture, but could be used to advance very different, even antithetical political and moral causes. I argue that the patriotic sublime was internalized even by those who opposed the expansionism and white supremacy it often was in service to: these dissenting groups tried to insist that the republic belonged to black citizens as well as white. Only consider the different uses to which Daniel Decatur Emmett, the Hutchinson Family, and James M. Deems used (for example) popular minstrel tunes. For Emmett and other minstrels, a tune like “Old Dan Tucker” was a vehicle to ridicule African Americans as well as the pretensions of jumped-up white strivers. For the Hutchinsons, it was grist for an antislavery argument that roused fervent emotion. For militia musicians like James Deems, it was appropriated for the patriotic sublime in its martial mode. But unlike Federalists and Jeffersonians in the 1790s, Emmett, the Hutchinsons, and Deems all used the same tune.

The patriotic sublime was then accessible to groups as varied as abolitionists, temperance folk, and black Americans, who all proposed different visions of national unity, and did it through music. They did it through genres of music as varied as

blackface minstrelsy, marching music played by black bands, the spirituals of enslaved African Americans, and the regional music of the West, all of which incorporated the musical sublime. These worlds referred to nationalist stereotypes even as they mocked them: the clever and self-reliant Westerner, for example, or the proud, nattily-attired militiamen tipped over into satire by Jim Brown.

Civic celebrations and commercial entertainments that centered on militia bands and an array of patriotic insignia elaborated the patriotic sublime in the context of a “mythic present.” rituals which confirmed that the brave, virile soldiery of the new republic had inherited the martial virtues of the heroes of the Revolutionary past, and would continue to embody their courageous deeds into the imperial future. Martial music ratified America’s Manifest Destiny. The militia band was the single most important phenomenon in generating expressions of patriotic sentiment recognized by all Americans. It combined familiar military music, like the field music of the fife and drum, with a technological revolution in new kinds of brass instruments. These new instruments and their colorful, powerful sonorities were central to the musical expression of the patriotic sublime. The martial culture of the volunteer militia and their bands fueled the national sentiment that made imperial adventures, such as the invasion of Mexico in 1846, politically possible, even in the face of opposition.

In 1847, the eulogist at the Baltimore funeral procession for William Watson and Randolph Ridgley presupposed assent to the martial sublime and its exaltation of the sights and sounds of war. Even death in battle was glorified. Antiwar constituencies would subvert such messages, then and always. The tug of war between groups who consider patriotism to require assent to state-sanctioned warfare and those who believe it

is patriotic to question those national policies has been a characteristic of American culture throughout its modern history. Still, the martial valence given the patriotic sublime by the time of the Mexican-American War would represent the default position for many, perhaps the majority, of Americans in the nation's conflicts, and in peacetime.

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Curriculum Vita

James Jackson Ashton was born February 13, 1974 in Lubbock, Texas. He grew up in Detroit, Michigan and Cincinnati, Ohio and attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1996. His subsequent career in not-for-profit arts management included a Master of Arts in Arts Administration from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, as well as a Master of Business Administration from the University of Cincinnati, both in 2001. It also spurred his interest in the culture of the arts and its history. After receiving a Master of Arts in history from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia in 2009, Ashton entered the Ph.D. program in history at Johns Hopkins University under the direction of Dr. Toby L. Ditz, also working with Dr. Ronald Walters as a secondary advisor.

Ashton has been the recipient of several fellowships and grants, including a Dissertation Write-Up Fellowship, the Richard P. Longaker Endowment Fellowship, and the Hodson Fellowship in the Humanities from Johns Hopkins University, and the Lord Baltimore Fellowship from the Maryland Historical Society. He has presented his research at the Maryland Historical Society and at national conferences sponsored by the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic and the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era. Ashton is a part-time faculty member at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, where he has taught classes on the cultural history of music in nineteenth-century America. He is also an affiliate faculty member of the Center for Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University, where he has taught a class on African American history and culture, and an affiliate faculty member at Loyola University Maryland.